
WhitePaper:
**Predicting Sales
Performance**

*Traits That Separate Top
and Bottom Sales Performance*



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Predicting Sales Performance

1. Behavioral Traits That Affect Sales Performance

When we purchase a car, we can be pretty certain that it will drive. When we buy a television, we know that when we turn it on, we can watch TV. When we install a new software program, we can expect that it will work as advertised. But when we hire a new salesperson, can we be sure that they will sell?

In most industries, it is common that 20% of the sales staff make 80% of the sales. But what do we do with that information? How can sales organizations reverse the trend? Most companies know who their top performers are, and they certainly know their poor performers. But how can we replicate the over-achievers so that 80% of the sales staff is composed of top performers?

Is it possible that these top performers might have some traits in common? Is it possible to know what these traits are and to measure them so that when we hire salespeople we know exactly what to seek out? Would it be desirable to predict a candidate's future sales performance in your company?

We found out.

Certain traits have been deemed by psychologists to be reliably measurable. We not only looked at behavioral traits, but also cognitive or mental traits as well as interest and motivation.

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Some of the traits we measured such as *competitiveness* seem obvious as predictors of sales performance. If we could measure competitiveness, could we then predict the performance of individuals?

The answer turns out to be *no*. Competitiveness was not the significant trait of top performers in any of the companies we researched.

Here are the traits we found to influence sales performance when they were measured in well over 1,000 individuals:

- **Independence** – Can they work on their own? Do they need the support of others?
- **Assertiveness** – Do they want to take charge and be in control?
- **Competitiveness** – How badly do they want to achieve?
- **Rules and Organization** – Do they want to be given a strict set of rules to follow or create their own way?
- **Conventional** – How do they react to change? Are they reactive? Innovative?
- **Extroversion** – How strong is their need to be around people? Are they outgoing?
- **Stability** – Can they handle pressure? Do they get stressed out? Upset? Can they handle criticism? How do they handle something going wrong?
- **Drive and Sense of Urgency** – Do they have it?
- **Reasoning Ability** – Can they reason and understand the consequences of their actions?
- **Thinking Style** – Do they use strategic thinking?
- **Learning and Communication** – Can they learn fast and handle many

things at once?

- **Interest in Working With People** – How much do they like working with people?
- **Interest in Working With Data** – How much do they like working with data, numbers, information?

The above are traits that enter into the mix of a person's behavior. This is not a complete list, but these are traits that we used over a period of a decade because they *are measurable*. Certainly other traits enter into the sales process, but unless we can measure and report them, we cannot make a valid presumption of predicting top sales performance. We have to be able to compile data that allows for comparing individuals on both a quantitative and qualitative basis.

Thus, the above mentioned traits form the basis for which the study of sales performance was conducted among sales organizations.

2. How The Research Was Conducted

This paper will discuss work performed at four sales organizations. Each has been selected for this white paper to provide insight into sales traits at both large and small organizations and in four totally separate and distinct industries. While the names of the companies remain confidential; we will review the data and findings in this paper. The four companies reviewed in this paper were a:

- Large international consulting firm
- Major software company
- Regional bank
- Two radio stations

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The following traits were measured on a scale of 1-10. Results were reported based on a bell curve whereby a score of 4-7 comprises 67% of the population; a score of 1 or 10 comprises 2.5% of the population. In each of the five companies, a written assessment was given to both top and bottom performers. In some cases, the assessment was taken by candidates for employment who were later hired and either became top or poor performers after the fact. Our objective was to see the traits in common of both groups (top and poor) and traits that distinguished top from poor performers. Because the strength of each trait was measured, we were able to see a clear trait difference where one was evident.

The assessment study consisted of six sections. The mental ability sections were timed in order to be able to assess the strength of the ability. The behavioral questions consisted of 110 questions giving the individual the opportunity to state their core behavior in each of 110 areas. Validity was maintained by evaluating consistency of answers, incomplete answers, and assurance that enough data was given by the respondent. The assessment was designed to be purely job related as an occupational assessment, not an instrument looking for attitude or deviant behavior. There was no gender, race or religious bias, nor was there any preconceived right or wrong answer.

TRAITS THAT WERE MEASURED (Full detail in Appendix A)

General Ability - A person's capacity to deal with ideas, to solve problems, understand relationships and to assimilate new information. It is a measure of reasoning ability and an indication of how well a person thinks ahead to anticipate the effects of actions and decisions and how quickly he or she learns, understand and explain ideas and concepts. It also shows a person's ability for strategic thinking, three dimensional thinking and ability to mentally handle a number of different items at the same time.

Interest and Motivation

People generally have stronger motivation to do work which truly interest them. If a person is not interested in a job, they won't focus on it or do it for very long. Motivation is a reason for taking action. This shows what people want in their job regardless of whether they have skills in the area.

We measured interest in three areas: wanting to work with People, Data and Things or Inanimate Objects.

Independence

This relates to how much *I want to be in charge* versus how much *I want others to be in charge*. Independent people are single-minded and determined to win. The higher the score, the more confident, hard-headed autocratic leaders. Individuals can be categorized as follows:

Diplomatic (low independent) - Generally likable, good-natured, considerate, cooperative and good at pulling people together through persuasion.

Competitive - Want very much to reach their goals. The higher the score the more they are happy with an *I win, you lose* situation.

Cooperative - Those who cooperate are non-competitive, desiring to make their contributions to achievement as members of a team.

Assertive - Assertive people want control. They operate under the statement, *I can be successful if I am in control and people will listen to me*.

Submissive - Helpful, tactful, seeking to avoid controversy and diffuse aggression. They would rather avoid conflict than confront it and operate under the statement, *I can be successful if someone will give me good direction*.

Conscientious

Conscientious individuals follow rules and abide by standard practices and procedures so you can depend on them. High scorers are highly structured, neat, tidy and detail-conscious. They tend to dislike change and are always well prepared through careful planning.

Spontaneous - People with spontaneity are flexible and unpredictable who work

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well in changing, challenging situations.

Conventional - Those with conventional traits will do their work in a meticulous and reliable manner, exhibiting traditional behavior. They need and want rules.

Innovative - Innovators are not bound by rules *and the way things have always been done*.

Organized - The mark of an organized person is a structured, controlled and carefully planned and arranged environment.

Reactive - People who are reactive seldom plan, choosing to react to circumstances as they arise. They are comfortable with surprises.

Extrovert

An extrovert enjoys the stimulation of being with many people, draws energy from others and wants to build relationships. They like exciting, lively places and are collaborative and may be more enthusiastic.

Introvert - An introvert prefers the company of a few close friends and is content to be alone. They choose quiet, familiar surroundings.

Group-oriented - A strong need for other people. They depend on the support, encouragement and social approval of others.

Self-sufficient - The ability to enjoy working alone for long periods of time.

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Outgoing - Outgoing people enjoy taking risks and accepting challenging and doing stimulating things.

Reserved - People described as reserved find everyday life stimulating and feel no need to seek further excitement. They are not bored by repetitive tasks.

Stability

This refers to the emotional component of the individual

Emotional - Emotional people are sensitive, mostly to their own feelings of anxiety, suspicion, guilt and irritability. They are fearful of new people and new situations.

Poised - People with poise shrug off criticism and cope with most adverse situations without becoming upset or irritated.

Restless - Restless people are easily upset, irritable and prone to lose their tempers. They don't take rejection well and tend to take things personally. They are also sensitive.

Relaxed - Relaxed people cope with stressful situations. They accept people at face value and are seldom bothered when things go wrong. A high score indicates a lower drive and possible lower sense of urgency.

Excitable - Excitable people become tense and anxious in stressful situations. They have trouble trusting and having confidence in their colleagues, being suspicious of the motives of others. They may let their stress lead to physical problems.

The above traits were measured using a series of tests and questions, combining the results into a chart. The chart shows the individual's score in each trait on a scale of 1-10.

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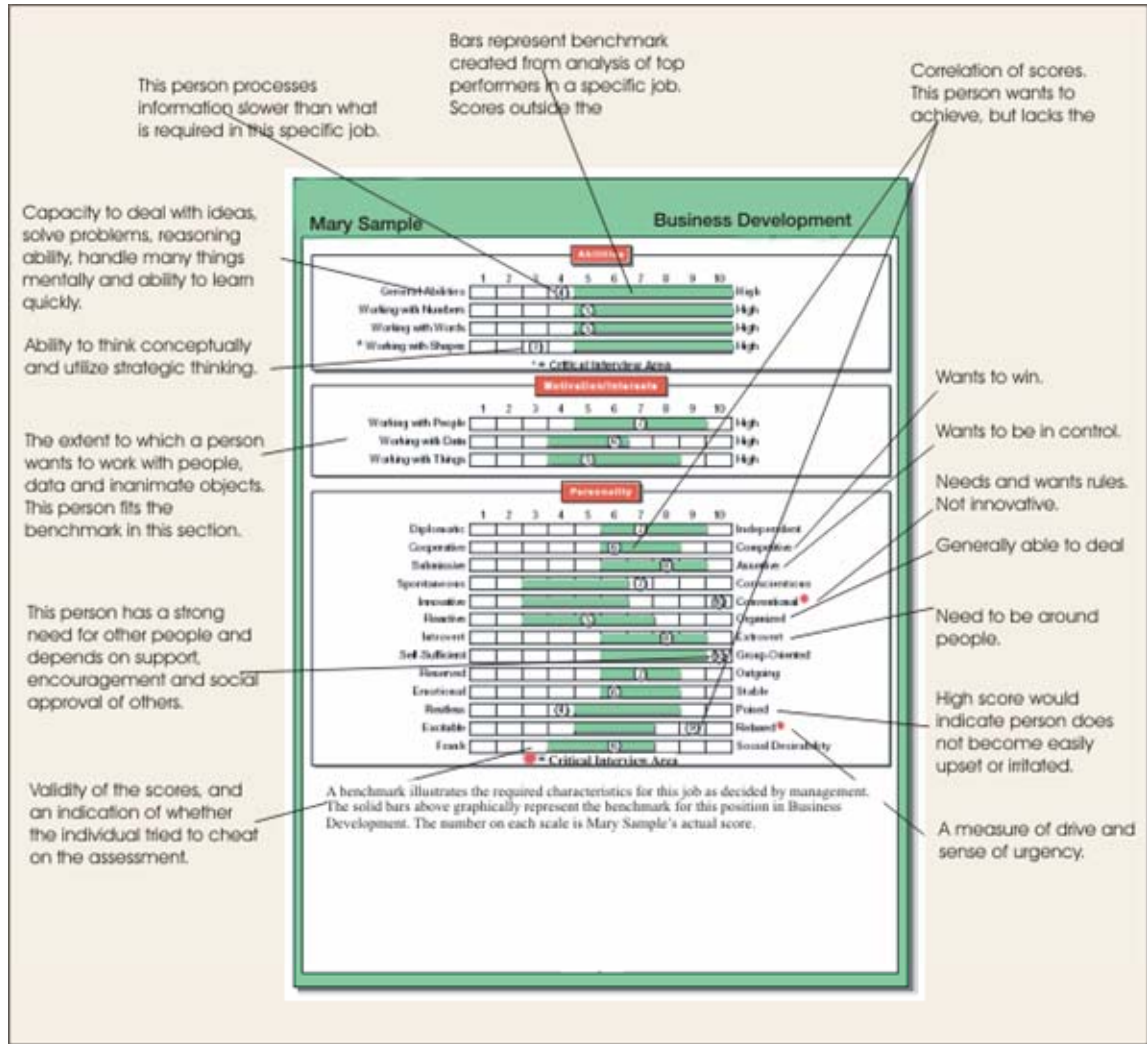


Table 1. Sample Individual Score

The above report shows an individual score against the measured traits. The solid bar within each trait depicts the benchmark produced by the traits in common of top performers in a specific job at a specific company.

Each of the number scores from 1-10 represent a traditional bell curve as follows:

Text Unit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
% of Population	2.5%	4.5%	9%	15%	19%	19%	15%	9%	4.5%	2.5%

3. Significant Sales Traits

In each of the following cases, the organization performed the assessment study on an initial group of top performers. Subsequent data was acquired from individuals who were either hired by the firm or were later assessed as an employee.

Case Study A: Large International Consulting Firm

Beginning in 1997, a benchmark was prepared from data derived from top performers. This was a new enterprise and, as such, no data was available for poor performers (the non-top performers were not deemed to be poor performers based on their time on the job). In 1999, a significant list of poor performers was made available, and another study was conducted which for the first time included an analysis of the traits in common as well as any significant traits that differentiated the top and bottom performers.

Prior to having the new data, the company used the original benchmark in making hiring decisions. Management felt that the two scores having the greatest impact on their hiring decision were:

- Mental Abilities
- Competitiveness

When the data of poor performers was produced, it showed a clear difference between top and bottom performers, primarily in one trait. This is a trait called *Relaxed* which is a measure of drive, sense of urgency and how they handle themselves when things do not go their way.

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The data showed that 80% of the top performers scored a 6-7 and 80% of the poor performers scored a 9-10 (high in *Relaxed* and low in *Drive*). These results were significant in that:

Having a high degree of competitiveness was not a deciding factor in the success of the individuals in this job. They needed to have a high competitiveness, but if they scored high in *Relaxed*, they had only a 20% chance of being a top performer.

The poor performers could be distinguished from the top performers (assuming other aspects were equal or satisfactory – they met the requirements of the benchmark) by their score in *Relaxed*. As such, their predicted job fit could be identified.

The other traits measured were not a factor in distinguishing top versus bottom performers.

Notwithstanding this data, the company continued to make hiring decisions which included hiring individuals who had scored a 9-10 in *Relaxed*. Over the next four years, new studies were conducted on top versus poor performers:

1999: 291 individuals studied

2000: 355 individuals studied

2001: 363 individuals studied

2002: 192 individuals studied

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Table 2. Benchmark as of 2002 showing traits and their strength of top performers in consulting firm. Areas in green (light shade) are in the benchmark; areas in red (dark shade) are red flags indicating an area of concern.

Over the four-year period, the change in results was insignificant; i.e. the results remained consistent. In addition, additional analysis was made periodically on individuals who had been fired or were otherwise deemed to be poor performers. Approximately half of those individuals had scored a 9-10 in *Relaxed* and thus, an argument could be made that they shouldn't have been hired. The data on the others showed significant differences in one or more traits from the benchmark and thus should have been predicted to not have the required job fit.

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Conclusion

The *Relaxed* trait may be understood in the following example:

A salesperson is driving home at the end of a long day. The person who is a 6-7 in *Relaxed* is thinking, "What can I do tomorrow to make this sale happen?" The person who is a 9-10 is thinking, "What's for dinner?"

Is this the deciding trait for all salespeople? No. It is for this company. The benefit from having this information was that the company was able to make hiring decisions with more confidence. Specifically, the company found a paradigm that allowed them to predict before making a hiring decision that a person would or would not be successful in their company in that specific job. Without the assessment of the individual's traits there would be no other way to determine if a candidate has this trait, or even to know that this trait is important. If a candidate scored well in general against the benchmark, yet scored a 9 or 10 in the *Relaxed* category, they were either not hired or their candidacy was placed under more rigorous examination (additional references, past history, etc.).

What is the benefit? If we identify 50 individuals that were hired, yet having this information in advance would not have been hired, we would have seen a tremendous savings in time, energy, dollars and prospective clients.

Assume the salary for this job and related payroll expenses of \$150,000. Add in any guess of managerial and administrative time that was wasted. We cannot add in the effect on potential new customers that were lost by virtue of dealing with a poor performer because that data is not measured. Multiplying \$150,000 by 50 people, a savings of \$7.5 million would have been achieved by not hiring those 50, and conceivably was achieved when the company began using the data in hiring decisions.

Let's look at another company . . .

Case Study B: Major Software Company

The company objective was to consider different selling models based on technical sales, application sales, industry sales, etc. They wanted to see the make-up of their staff in order to analyze the traits of their top performers and then investigate the use of this information in making decisions about potential reorganization of sales models. In other words, did they have the right people for the right job? Using the same methodology as in the previous case, data was obtained from both top and bottom performers.

The behavioral job assessment provided the information and allowed a much higher confidence level in making the reorganization decisions. The new information was in another way a paradigm because it, in essence, provided an inventory of the make-up of the sales population, illuminating the current critical traits of top performers and allowing for decisions on re-working the make-up based on corporate reorganization objectives. The assessment showed the difference in top and bottom performers was not in *Relaxed*, but in *Conscientiousness* and *Mental Abilities*. The top performers had combined high scores in these two areas, whereas poor performers were low in at least one of the two.

Conclusion

The top performers are more inclined to abide by standard practices and procedures. Detail-conscious and well prepared, they do their work in a reliable manner, structured and intend to do things the right way. They are organized and operate in a carefully planned environment.

It seems that in this company, success comes not from *Drive* but from attention to working according to the standard sales process for this company. In another software company perhaps these individuals would not be top performers. Why? Each company

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has its own set of traits—culture, policies, management style and expectations. The information collected only reflects a specific job in this specific company and, in a passive way, indicates a benchmark for top performance that includes those intangibles. As a result, this company can utilize the benefit of knowing what it takes to be a top performer for them and avoid spending millions of dollars on bad hiring decisions.

This company benefited from the knowledge gained from the study. They were in a much better position to properly reorganize elements of the sales force to better sync with certain customers and prospects. Having information such as competitiveness and drive, for example, the company benefited by being able to allocate individuals based on job fit and predictability of performance.

As these individuals are paid at the same level as the aforementioned consulting firm, the benefit to the software company in having this kind of information can and will have a tremendous impact in terms of time, energy and dollars.

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- Case Study C: Regional Bank

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
General Abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Shapes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with People	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Diplomatic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Independent
Cooperative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Competitive
Submissive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Assertive
Spontaneous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Conscientious
Innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Conventional
Reactive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Organized
Introvert	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Extrovert
Self-Sufficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Group-Oriented
Reserved	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Outgoing
Emotional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Stable
Restless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Poised
Excitable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Relaxed
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Social Desirability

Table 3. Commercial Banking Salesperson Benchmark. The key factor that separates the top versus poor performers is Innovative and Reactive. Poor performers scored higher than top performers.

The individuals assessed in this study were in a job requiring them to go out into the marketplace and sell the bank's services to business customers, attempting to have them switch their banking business. Twenty-five individuals were studied, and eight were deemed top performers. The bank wanted to understand why, when the entire group seemed similar in behavior, some were top performers and others were not. Each was predicted to be a top performer when they were hired, yet what made the difference?

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Conclusion

The key traits separating the top and poor performers are *Reactive* and *Innovative*. This indicates that the top performers had the innate ability to visit with a prospect and, based on their input, needs and/objections, react with a solution. The poor performers did not have this trait and thus were not suited to perform at a top level for this bank. Why might this trait be important for a bank? In consumer banking, a bank will often be chosen for its location of a branch close to the customer. In commercial banking, it is most difficult to obtain a new customer by having them change their bank. If the prospect is unhappy with their bank or has a problem or has been turned down for a loan, it will be easier to get them to change banks. Otherwise, the success of the salesperson will probably be based on their individual sales skill, mental ability and behavioral traits. For this reason, the ability to have this assessment information at the time of the hiring decision is critical in selecting those individuals who are predicted to be top performers.

- **Case Study D: Two Radio Stations**

This case study reviews two radio stations in the same city. One was the market leader (Station A). The assessment study showed a marked difference in *Competitiveness* and *Extroversion* between the two stations (*Tables 4,5*). The tables show that the salespeople at Station A were much more competitive and had a greater need to interact with other people and be the center of attention. In the highly charged atmosphere of radio selling, these are key traits. (In the previous cases, these traits would not be as desirable). It is therefore, highly beneficial to the company to have this information about an individual at the time of the hiring decision because of not just selecting the right individual, but also saving the time, energy and dollars associated with a bad hiring decision.

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In observations of the two companies, it was noted that Station A had no sales meetings. The Sales Manager simply greeted each salesperson each morning and instructed them to “Get out the door and sell.” Station B had regular sales meetings. In general, those who score lower in *Competitiveness* tend to prefer a team and sharing environment.

Conclusion

Station A was eventually sold to a group that stressed sales meetings and a team environment. They lost the salespeople. An interesting observation is in the importance of teaming top performing salespeople with a complementary set of managerial traits in their sales manager. If the salespeople in Station A had to endure sales meetings and team activities, they would be *out of fit* with their core competencies. Having the right sales manager based on the traits of the top performers is a critical factor in a sales organization.

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	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
General Abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Shapes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with People	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
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Reserved	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Outgoing
Emotional	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Stable
Restless	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Poised
Excitable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Relaxed
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Social Desirability

Table 4. Station A. Note the high scores in competitive, assertive and extroversion. If a person does not have the strength of these particular traits, regardless of other traits, they would be predicted to fail in this particular company.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
General Abilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Working with Shapes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
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Excitable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Relaxed
Frank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Social Desirability

Table 5. Station B. Less competitive and aggressive than Station A.

4. Summary of Results

While the research conducted has provided us with the knowledge of the key traits that lead to top sales performance, it has also shown that this assessment tool is proven to be a reliable way to uncover these traits in time to make hiring decisions that add top performers and avoid selecting poor performers.

- a. **Competitiveness** - One would traditionally think that competitiveness and extroversion either are or should be the expected traits that lead to top performance in sales. This data shows that although competitiveness is a necessary trait, it is not the key trait in sales performance.

- b. **Dissimilarity of Traits Among Organizations** - The data shows that top sales performance in an organization requires different traits in different companies. In the large consulting firm, the key trait separating top from poor performers was *Relaxed*, or *Drive and Sense of Urgency*. In the software company, it was *Conscientious and Mental Abilities*. In the bank, it was *Reactive*. In the radio stations, it was actually *Competitiveness*.

- c. **Strength of Trait** - The data shows that although most, if not all, salespeople exhibit traits in common, it is the measurable strength of those traits which foretells the difference in performance.

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- d. **Hiring Decision is Key** - The data indicates, not surprisingly, that many are selected for sales positions who will ultimately fail—not necessarily because they are not competent or capable, but because they simply do not have the job fit to be a top performer in that specific job in that specific company. The hiring decision is a critical factor, if not the critical factor in the success of a company's sales performance.

5. Notes from the Author

In preparing this paper and reviewing the conclusions of the data, it brings to mind the term, *20-20 hindsight vision*. It has always been possible to see the poor performers in a sales organization—*after they have exhibited their poor performance*. If only we had known at the time of the hiring decision that they would be a poor performer, we would save countless time, dollars and energy. Not to mention, we might have picked up new business that the poor performer may have ruined.

This data suggests that each organization can probe deeper into their hiring process to understand those traits that will predict top performance. An individual who appears to be a *people person* and a *competitive person* in an interview may just be that next poor performer, fooling both themselves and the interviewer because they know how to interview.

About the Study

The data in this study was generated by the use of a predictive job assessment administered within each organization by Epstar Inc. (www.epstar.com). Epstar is a business consulting firm specializing in the area of job fit and performance prediction. The data used in this study was actually used by the organizations in studying their hiring decisions.

APPENDIX A

General Ability measures a person's capacity to deal with ideas, to solve problems, understand relationships and to assimilate new information. It is a measure of reasoning ability and an indication of how well a person thinks ahead to anticipate the effects of actions and decisions and how quickly he or she learns. It also shows a person's ability for strategic thinking, three dimensional thinking and ability to mentally handle a number of different items at the same time. This is not a measure of IQ, but rather a match of a person's *brain power* to the specific job, i.e., the score should match the job. For example, a person with a high score needs to be in a job where their brain is fully engaged.

Working with Numbers is an evaluation of numerical reasoning ability and how we solve problems. It shows how well an individual reasons with new information, data, and numbers. It indicates ability to think logically and solve problems.

Working with Words relates to reasoning with and using written language effectively, primarily the ability to use information to explain and understand ideas and concepts. It is an indication of written communication skills. A low scorer does not want to communicate.

Working with Shapes has to do with spatial skills, or how well a person is able to manipulate objects, both physically and visually. It is an indication of a person's ability to think in three dimensions, think conceptually and utilize strategic thinking.

Motivation and Interest

People generally have stronger motivation to do work which truly interest them. If a person is not interested in a job, they won't focus on it or do it for very long. Motivation is a reason for taking action. Motivation/Interests fall into three areas. A person can be high or low in any or all areas--they are separate.

Working with People measures the extent to which an individual needs or wants involvement in working with people. It also indicates whether a person wants to mentor, negotiate, instruct, supervise, delegate, persuade, interact, serve and help. A person with a low score will be more discriminating in who they are interested in working with.

Working with Data measures how a person feels about working with numbers, words, statistics, symbols, facts and figures. It is different from Working with Numbers because it measures interest, not ability. Working with Data indicates interest in synthesizing, coordinating, analyzing, compiling, computing, copying and comparing.

Working with Things measures interest in working with inanimate objects such as machinery, tools and equipment. Interest in Working with Things includes setting up, precision working, operating-controlling, driving-operating, manipulating, tending, unloading and handling.

Behavioral Traits

Independent

This relates to how much *I want to be in charge* versus how much *I want others to be in charge*. Independent people are single-minded and determined to win. The higher the score, the more confident, hard-headed autocratic leaders. They take charge and get things done, although they can be insensitive to the needs of those around them (see Stability). The Independence scores are an indicator of team dynamics. Not all people should serve on teams. There should be a proper mix of higher scoring individuals with lower scoring individuals. A person with a score of 9 may be too dictatorial and autocratic for individuals who score a 3. Terms that generally apply to a high score include active, physical, hard-headed, skeptical, proud, plays to win, rational, assertive forthright and socially bold.

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Diplomatic (Low Independent)

Diplomats are generally likable and good-natured. They are considerate, cooperative and good at pulling people together through persuasion. They sometimes choose to avoid conflict and controversy to preserve relationships. They are generally non-assertive and retiring and sensitive to the needs of others.

Competitive

Competitive people strive hard to reach their goals. The higher the score the more they are happy with an *I win, you lose* situation. They are interested in personal achievements and play to win at any cost, sometimes using others to get what they want. This is an important score for a sales person. Generally, a low score is not good for a sales position.

Cooperative

Those who cooperate are non-competitive, desiring to make their contributions to achievement as members of a team. They will forego their own success to help others. They may not be a good negotiator and may not fight for something.

Assertive

Assertive people want control and may be outspoken because they know their own minds and are not afraid to say so. They operate under the statement, *I can be successful if I am in control and people will listen to me*. They seek to be group leaders. They can create conflict through their sometimes controversial and unpopular opinions. They stand up for what they believe. A high scoring individual may be pushy, outspoken and aggressive. A low assertive (Submissive) may be uncomfortable with a high assertive.

Submissive

People who are submissive are helpful, tactful, seeking to avoid controversy and diffuse aggression. They would rather avoid conflict than confront it. They operate under the statement, *I can be successful if someone will give me good direction*.

Conscientious

Conscientious individuals follow rules and abide by standard practices and procedures so you can depend on them. High scorers are highly structured, neat, tidy and detail-conscious. They tend to dislike change and are always well prepared through careful planning.

Spontaneous

People with spontaneity are flexible and unpredictable who work well in changing, challenging situations. When problems arise, they often adopt creative and unorthodox solutions. They tend to be a kind of person who says, *tell me my job and what's expected of me, and let me do it my way*. They will tend to challenge the rules.

Conventional

Those with conventional traits will do their work in a meticulous and reliable manner, exhibiting traditional behavior. They are trustworthy, structured and intent of doing things *the right way*. They need and want rules.

Innovative

Innovators are not bound by rules *and the way things have always been done*. They would rather explore new routes than take the well-traveled path, often viewing established rules, policies and procedures as obstacles to progress. They are looking for a better way to do things. Combined with a high mental abilities score (ability to see the big picture/consequences of their actions), this person could be creative.

Organized

The mark of an organized person is a structured, controlled and carefully planned and arranged environment. They plan carefully to meet deadlines, but dislike situations where they must improvise, *think on their feet*, or engage in unstructured debate. They are uncomfortable if plans change

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Reactive

People who are reactive seldom plan, choosing to react to circumstances as they arise. They are comfortable with surprises. They take a broad view of events and leave details to others. Their work areas may appear disorganized, however, this is more a case of unorganized rather than disorganized.

Extrovert

An extrovert enjoys the stimulation of being with many people, draws energy from others and wants to build relationships. High scorers, if given the opportunity, want to be the center of attention. They may even talk too much and not listen. In fact, those with low Motivation/Interest scores will tend to talk more about inconsequential matters than those with higher Motivation/Interest scores. They like exciting, lively places. They are collaborative and may be more enthusiastic. As we mature, this score tends to move toward the middle.

Introvert

An introvert prefers the company of a few close friends and is content to be alone. They choose quiet, familiar surroundings. They don't work well on teams if they also have low Independence scores because they are self-sufficient.

Group-oriented

A strong need for other people is the chief trait of group-oriented people. They depend on the support, encouragement and social approval of others. While they want to be on the team or included in the group, they may not be interested in standing out or serving in leadership roles.

Self-sufficient

The ability to enjoy working alone for long periods of time is the mark of the self-sufficient person. While they can work with others, they have no need to do so.

Outgoing

Outgoing people enjoy taking risks and accepting challenging and doing stimulating things. They dislike repetitive tasks and like being with other people for the stimulation they provide.

Reserved

People described as reserved find everyday life stimulating and feel no need to seek further excitement. They are not bored by repetitive tasks and tend to live quite, orderly lives.

Stable

This measures the emotional component of the individual. Those who are described as stable are generally untroubled and calm. They face problems and unforeseen circumstances without suffering undue stress, remaining relaxed and secure. They are untroubled by criticism. High scorers are relaxed, poised, laid back and lack a sense of urgency and may be cold, insensitive and matter-of-fact. They are often surprised that others are so sensitive.

Emotional

Emotional people are sensitive, mostly to their own feelings of anxiety, suspicion, guilt and irritability. They are fearful of new people and new situations. While you may want someone who is sensitive to other's feelings, they may also be fragile easily hurt.

Poised

People with poise shrug off criticism and cope with most adverse situations without becoming upset or irritated. They accept that few things proceed in life without a few things going wrong. A high score here could be bad for a sales position in that they may easily accept defeat.

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Restless

Restless people are easily upset, irritable and prone to lose their tempers. They don't take rejection well and tend to take things personally. They are sensitive and tend to view the world as basically hostile and threatening and tend to look on the negative side.

Relaxed

Relaxed people are well prepared to cope with stressful situations. They accept people at face value and are seldom bothered when things go wrong. A high score indicates a lower drive and possible lower sense of urgency. In addition, they are accepting of people and able to leave their worries behind. In a sales situation, the high scorer may not have perseverance or fear of failure, even though they may have a high competitive score.

Excitable

Excitable people become tense and anxious in stressful situations. They have trouble trusting and having confidence in their colleagues, being suspicious of the motives of others. They may let their stress lead to physical problems.

Social Desirability and Validity

The testing methodology described above uses four internal validity checks to validate the accuracy of data and determine if the reported data is reliable. These validations are a way of the assessment testing itself to tell us about the accuracy of the information in the report. These checks include erratic answers, omitted answers and too many in-between or undecided (B) [note: readers haven't seen the test, don't know what "(B)" implies.] answers. A problem with validity is noted at the end of the report and will signify that the report is not of the highest reliability. In some cases, if the assessment does not reach the required validity level, a Selection Report or other report using a benchmark cannot be produced.

A high score (9-10) indicates a person has probably painted a better picture, an

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exaggerated picture of themselves. They may be, in essence, *cheating* on the assessment by answering the way they think will make them look good. We do not know the reason: they may be trying to paint a better picture of themselves; they may not know themselves well enough to portray in the assessment; they may be anxious about hiding something; or they may really be *what they say they are*. They are *faking good*, presenting what they feel to be a socially acceptable view of themselves rather than an honest picture of how they really are. Scores in the area of 7-8 are more stable and conscientious and, in general indicate a higher desire to be socially desirable. They may tend to have a concern for traditional high moral values and are more able to accept people at face value. Generally, they do not tell lies, tend to be nice to people and try to always do the *right* thing.