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The Science of Hiring the Right Salespeople

Finding and hiring exceptional salespeople is more a science than an art

Today more than ever, executives need fast results from their sales teams. When you're hiring a new salesperson, knowing with certainty whether a candidate has the qualities and performance potential you need is far better than guessing.

Easy to say, but harder to do. Spotting the best salespeople for your team requires a proven candidate assessment process. The right process reduces hiring risk by giving you time-tested, scientifically proven data on which to base your hiring decisions.

Consequences of Hiring Right

Hiring the right person for the right job at the right time will grow your business faster, save your company money and make managing your new sales representative far easier and more effective: a winning scenario for everyone.

Consider some surprising sales performance statistics that hold true across a variety of industries. These show the measurable consequences to hiring right — or hiring wrong.

- The average tenure of a business-to-business (B2B) salesperson is 1.4 years (16.8 months). Fewer than 5% of salespeople stay on board for more than three years.ⁱ
- Bringing a new hire to full productivity takes longer than ever. More than 65% of businesses say it takes at least 7 months; 29% of businesses plan for at least one yearⁱⁱ. This means that most salespeople have only four to seven months of full productivity in their position!
- According to Harvard Business Review, 63% of all salespeople underperform.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Finding a new salesperson is expensive; companies pay an average of \$114,957, including separation costs, training costs and acquisition costs.^{iv}
- Workplace hiring data from the last 100 years reveals that personality tests alone were only slightly more helpful as a predictor of future job performance than just looking at a resume. So-called “multi-measure tests” showed the highest correlation between test scores and predicted job performance.^v
- Thinking beyond a simple new hire orientation helps. Organizations with strong onboarding processes improve new hire retention by 82% and productivity by over 70%.^{vi}

Good Training Can't Fix the Wrong Hire

Can't you always train for sales success?

Not really.

In an economic downturn, most senior executives appropriately cut sales training from their budgets. Deep down, they know that traditional sales training does not reliably deliver results, especially over the short term. There is no direct causal link between sales training and an increase in sales. Simply put, after the training program, high performers continue to be high performers and low performers continue to be low performers.

To get the attention of the underperforming salesperson, companies often try to manage them to better performance. Many companies put low performers on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Unfortunately, almost all salespeople who go on a PIP are ultimately fired. It's not a question of willpower or attention; they are simply unable to make the changes necessary to be a consistent top performer.

Hiring As A Science

Research has shown that unless a person's brain is hard-wired a certain way, they will not and cannot excel in sales – period! This hard wiring, or lack of it, is the biggest reason for success and failure in selling.

There is a compelling, direct connection between high scores of what is called the “Sales DNA” and high performance in selling. Selling is a complex, internal game. Success requires using the qualities encoded in this hidden and very specific Sales DNA.

A partial list of the Sales DNA required for high performance selling includes:

- self-starting capacity
- attitude towards and the ability to relate to others
- emotional control
- personal drive
- problem situation analysis
- creating and sustaining an emotional connection
- results orientation
- the ability to read people and persuade others
- results orientation
- handling stress factors
- self-esteem

Seeing Hidden Sales DNA

One of the biggest challenges with hiring is that interviews give you very limited information. According to John Pyke, founder of the Talent Genius company, hiring managers can only see about 12% of the information about a candidate that they need to make an informed hiring decision.

With the Brakke tools, you can assess the remaining 88%, the hidden information that is far more important than the visible aspects of personality.

As with an iceberg, what is below the surface matters most.



Since qualities encoded in Sales DNA cannot be taught or learned, selecting salespeople based on their innate Sales DNA is absolutely essential. Traditional hiring, based on selling skills and industry experience, is far less effective than using these hidden, innate qualities.

James Watson, winner of the Nobel Prize for helping discover DNA, described the human brain as “the most complex thing we have yet discovered in our universe.” Author Daniel Pink, in his book, *A Whole New Mind*, describes this complexity: “The typical brain consists of some 100 billion cells, each of which connects and communicates with up to 10,000 of its colleagues. Together they forge an elaborate network of some one quadrillion (1,000,000,000,000,000) connections that guides how we talk, eat, breathe, and move.”

With a system of one quadrillion connections, is it any wonder that recruiting sales stars the first time, every time is such an enormous challenge?

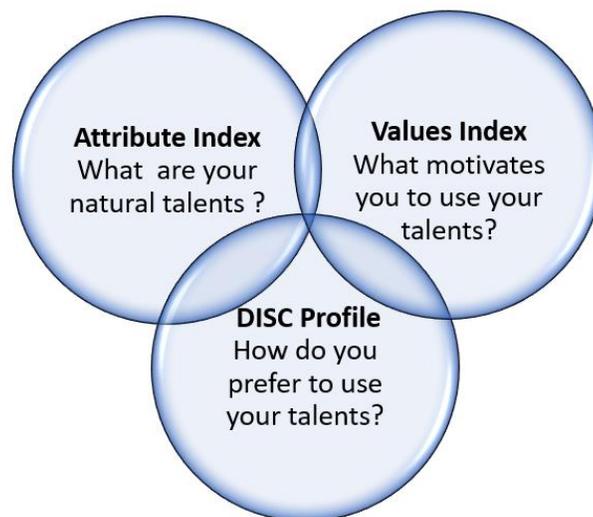
Brakke's hiring solutions help you identify consistent, top-performing sales professionals. Our solutions are so accurate that we provide all clients with a one-year, unconditional replacement guarantee. This is four times the industry standard of three months.

Spotting Talents and More...The ADVanced Insights Profile

Combining powerful science with the wisdom of experience is the best way to find top sales performers. Limiting your interviews to candidates whose profiles match that of a successful salesperson helps you, the hiring manager, to make better choices. You get smoother on-boarding, stronger performance, less turnover, greater sales and lower costs.

At Brakke Consulting we have extensive experience in identifying, leading and managing sales people around the world in successful animal health and nutrition companies. We combine that expertise with the ADVanced Insights Profile to objectively understand each person's talents.

Our Profile combines three separate and interdependent assessments into a comprehensive whole.



The **Attribute Index** measures answers to the question, “**What are your natural talents?**” This revolutionary profile measures a person’s cognitive style and determines how they think.

There are three distinct styles of decision making: the **personal**, the **practical** and the **analytical**. Each of us develops a preference for one more than the other two, based on our innate talents and subconscious strengths. The preference becomes an unseen force which affects our decisions and how we see ourselves and the world around us.

The Attribute Index is based on the groundbreaking work of Dr. Robert S. Hartman and has been validated by more than 300,000 people in 18 countries. The Attribute Index measures a person’s ability in over 80 business related areas that are impossible for even the most

skilled manager to detect in an interview. It can be used to find, develop and keep your best employees.

The **Values Index** measures answers to the question, “**What motivates you to use your talents?**” Combining the work of Drs. Eduard Spranger and Gordon Allport to assess seven dimensions of motivation, this is one of the most powerful assessments of individual motivation available. A person's values influence their behavior and action, but they often remain hidden unless you have known or worked with that person for a long time. Your values drive your passion, your energy, and inspiration; they explain why you prefer to do what you do. Understanding your team members' motivations is key to increasing their engagement with their work

We measure answers to the question, “**How do you prefer to use your talents?**” with the **DISC Index**, the widely used and validated interpretation of Dr. William Marston's groundbreaking work into understanding a person's natural behavioral style. Understanding a person's behavioral style – their habits – is critical when selecting and developing top salespeople. Fortunately these behaviors and habits are acquired, and thus relatively easy to see and relatively easy to change if necessary.

Assessment Beyond the Hiring Process

The benefits of the ADVanced Insights Profile assessments in hiring a new salesperson are clear. These powerful tools can also be used in other situations to drive better sales performance, regardless of the size of the team or the industry involved. Working with Brakke Consulting on an improved sales force hiring system involves:

- 1) **Evaluating your existing salespeople** We complete a one-page Strength Plan highlighting each salesperson's innate talents and blind spots. The Strength Plan explains how to best communicate with them (their personality style) and how to create the ideal work environment (their motivators). The motivational aspect is critical; studies show that the most significant component for employee longevity and loyalty is the strength of their relationship with their immediate manager.
- 2) **Creating an ideal hiring benchmark** We evaluate your entire sales force and create a customized template for comparing all potential new hires against the average scores of your current top performers.
- 3) **Sales training based on the DISC personality assessment.** Every salesperson should be able to recognize a buyer's personality style and to match and mirror their communication style. It helps the salesperson sell faster, overcome objections more easily and build product loyalty among customers.
- 4) **Expanding your sales team** Use our expertise to make your hiring process easier and more effective. Using the ADVanced Insights Profile and our years of experiences,

Brakke will find, assess and present to you the top 10% of salespeople that will excel in your environment. All you have to do is interview them and make your selections!

Getting Started

If this sounds too good to be true, test us. Let us send a link to the assessment tool to two people in your sales team: one consistently high performer and one consistently low performer. Don't tell us which is which. After they take the 30-minute assessment, we not only tell you which person is the high performer and which the low performer; we'll tell you why they perform that way.

See for yourself how our science can show you what is blocking your sales team from high performance, and how powerful the ADVanced Insights Profile is when applied to selecting and managing a sales team.

Let us know how we can help by contacting Bob Jones at bob@itsallaboutpeople.com or by calling 336-456-0583.

ⁱ Trish Bertuzzi. The 2016 Sales Metrics Report: 355 B2B Sales Orgs Spill the Beans. 2016. Sales Hacker.com

ⁱⁱ Drawing Back the Bow: 2016 CSO Insights Sales Best Practices Study CSO Insights. 2016. Miller Heiman Group

ⁱⁱⁱ Ryals and Davies. 2010. Vision Statement: Do You Really Know Who Your Best Salespeople Are? Harvard Business Review

^{iv} Trish Bertuzzi. The 2016 Sales Metrics Report: 355 B2B Sales Orgs Spill the Beans. 2016. Sales Hacker.com

^v Hunter and Schmidt. 2004. Methods of Meta-Analysis: Correcting Error and Bias in Research Findings (2nd ed.)

^{vi} The True Cost of a Bad Hire, Bandon Hall Group Research Team, September 2015