

Top UK sales people: how do you compare with the Best?

In January, we reported that research in the USA, Germany and Holland confirms that there is a strong correlation between a high Utilitarian attitude and exceptional sales performance, and that high sales achievers can be identified by using simple and cost-effective assessment tools. Nik Plevan, Managing Director of The Best Behaviour Company, is now extending this research to see how UK top sales professionals stack up. Your sales people can be part of this research.

Our research in the US, Germany and Holland, has confirmed what most successful Sales Managers have known for years; that attitudes, values and beliefs far outweigh “looking good and sounding good” in distinguishing top salespeople.

This does not mean that behavioural characteristics - “looking good and sounding good” – are not important, far from it. It simply underlines the fact that there are as many different kinds of sales people as there are sales environments, and that attitudes drive behaviour.

Here are two extremes. Imagine two highly successful sales professionals; one selling water treatment plant to local government, the other financial services to the corporate pensions market.

Now, swap them around, and ask them to sell into each other's markets.

Would they still be top sales performers? Probably not. Clearly, each job has its own specific optimum behaviour which will result in outstanding performance.

But surely behavioural skills can be learned? Well, yes, and no.

The problem is that we often assume that, even if we put people in a job they don't like, they can learn to like it, once they get used to it. They may adapt their own behaviour to that required by the job, but the more they adapt, the more energy they spend in adapting, and the less is available to put into the job itself. Poor performance results, with work-related stress often an added complication.

The causes lie in mismatching the person's preferred behavioural style with a



role whose optimum behavioural requirement is just too different. If what is required is only a minor adjustment, then more energy and focus is directed on the job itself. They can be themselves, and work doesn't seem so much like work anymore.

What our research has shown, however, is that while a salesperson's “natural” behavioural fit is important, in terms of *predicting* sales performance it is of equal if not greater importance that they should have a high Utilitarian attitude – a focus on practicality, efficiency, and a return on investment of time, money and resources.

But isn't that obvious? Everyone knows that all sales people are motivated by money.

Actually, no. Not ALL sales people are motivated by money. What our research in the US and Europe shows so far is that around 75% of the *successful* ones are!

We are now extending this research to include the UK's top sales performers. We are looking for around 500 outstanding sales achievers, 2-3 from each company that wishes

to take part, to take two of our assessments on-line.

One is based on the internationally validated DISC behavioural model, and the other on our Personal Interests, Attitudes and Values model (PIAV), currently being validated internationally. Everyone who takes part will instantly receive – by e-mail – their own comprehensive behavioural and attitudinal profile reports – some 38 pages of valuable personal development information.

To thank your people for taking part, we are also giving them the opportunity try out another assessment, the Sales Strategy Index. This is an objective analysis of a their understanding of the whole sales process which identifies areas of strength and potential weakness.

All data collected will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for the purposes of this research. Companies that take part will receive a copy of the research findings. We will also be pleased to offer Sales Managers and Directors their own complimentary behavioural and attitudinal profiles.

To take part in this research study, please contact us by sending an e-mail to research@bestbehaviour.net and telling us a little about your company and your salespeople. We will then send you full instructions on how to proceed.

Nik Plevan is Managing Director of The Best Behaviour Company.

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