



## Assess For Success

Chances of finding a sales superstar are low.  
Five ways to weed out underperformers early

By Jim Peduto

Summer is around the corner and with it barbecue season. Whether you're a five-star chef or just grilling your own juicy hamburger at home, selecting the best ingredients makes all the difference. The same thing is also true when hiring salespeople.

Research shows that only 7 percent of sales representatives are elite performers so your chances of randomly finding a superstar are low. That is why best-in-class companies are 83 percent more likely to use sales-specific assessment tools to identify star performers.

Here are the five things that premiere sales organizations are doing that give them an edge.

**1. Identify The Ideal Candidate.** This is the most important step in the process. The key is to paint a vivid picture of the behaviors and skills that a sales rep needs to have to succeed working for your company, selling your products, to your customers. Insist that the assessment tool compares your "perfect fit" profile to your candidate's results.

**2. Assess Early.** The research is conclusive: The sooner that you assess a candidate the better. Three good things happen when your hiring process begins with an assessment.

- First, assessing candidates immediately upon receiving a resume produces 50 percent more hireable candidates than delaying the assessment until later in the process. Manually sorting through resumes is time-consuming and eliminates potentially successful candidates.

- Second, guidelines set by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) require

that if a company chooses to use an assessment, they must assess all of their candidates. Since the EEOC's position is that an individual becomes an applicant the moment his/her resume is submitted electronically, if you are using an assessment tool you are required to use it for every candidate.

- Third, assessing early facilitates automation of the hiring process and saves time and money.

**3. Use A Sales-specific Assessment.**

The vast majority of sales assessments are simply personality tests that have been tweaked for sales and are not effective. They fail because they measure personality traits and generalized behavior, but not sales-specific behavior. For example, a candidate might show he or she is motivated to succeed, but unless he or she is motivated to sell, the finding is meaningless. Remember,

it is sales-specific behaviors and

competencies, not personality traits, that lead to sales success.

The best firms use customized, sales-specific, predictive assessments to identify the candidates who are most likely to succeed.

**4. Predictive Validity.** Did

you know that nearly half (46 percent) of sales rep fail within the first 18 months? Your success depends on being able to accurately predict a candidate's likelihood of success at your company. If the assessment can't do that, don't use it.

**5. Interview Less.** Sometimes, less is more. Limit your interviews to only those candidates that your sales assessment tools tell you are likely to reach the top half of your sales force in 12 months. The candidate's assessment should also provide you with insight into areas that you want to explore during the interview.

Although finding the right ingredient or sales candidate takes a little time, you will love the result. 



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