

Selection - Sales and Marketing



ProfileSoft

Getting the most from your human capital

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Key behaviours

This individual's answers to the ProfileSoft questionnaire are compatible with those of the population and the results are valid according to the established norms.



Entrepreneurship (Approach to undertaking projects, activities)

This individual is efficient in a structured work situation. She is calm and relaxed. She reacts satisfactorily to sporadic stress. She requires a detailed work plan, a structure, specific activities and objectives. She is resigned, pleasant and cautious.



Motivation (Criteria, motivator factors)

She is ambitious and energetic. Her commitment and energy level are above average. She is moderately results-oriented. She enjoys performing in challenging situations. She gains great satisfaction by helping others and by additional income. She seeks additional challenges in her work environment on a day-to-day basis.



Leadership (Tendency to act alone or in a team)

She is independent, unyielding and very demanding. She needs a great deal of freedom to be satisfied at work. She dislikes constant, close supervision. She seeks to develop her own abilities.



Interaction style (Approach to maintaining contacts with others)

She is reserved and selective. She prefers personal contact with people she knows very well. She functions very well in a job with a minimum amount of human contact. The contacts that she develops with various people are not a source of satisfaction to her, especially in her work. Developing and mastering her interactive skills require constant effort on her part.



Technical orientation (Interest in theory or practice)

She is stimulated by practical aspects of the work. She is more at ease with concrete notions and prefers practical instruction. She prefers dealing with practical problems or applications with her colleagues, rather than theoretical ones. She is not stimulated by detailed or conceptual work.

Performance conditions

Short term

An environment where there is daily pressure. She likes a job with established objectives and detailed work plans. She likes to use her skills to adapt to and follow an already established procedure.

A work environment with sufficient challenges to make her work interesting. She wants a job where the rewards can be both financial and satisfying on a human level.

A job that allows for great freedom of action and where she is able to innovate her own work methods. She prefers an environment that calls upon her creativity and where there is little supervision.

She wants a job that demands almost no interaction with other people. She is happiest in an environment where social interaction and meeting people are not required and where interactive skills are of little value.

She needs a work environment where training is practical. A job with few intellectual demands suits her best.

Long term

This person is more oriented towards a support or a service position than towards developing business. For her to be productive and satisfied in a supervisory role, her job must be very well structured and involve tasks that are established and defined.

She needs a stimulating work environment that offers challenges, recognition and financial rewards. She requires a position where productivity is the key to success. Such stimuli are most appropriate to her self-motivation.

She performs best in a job without supervision. In fact, she feels that the people she supervises should be autonomous. In her opinion, each person should function alone and independently.

Work involving a lot of contact with new people stimulates her. She uses persuasion rather than her technical knowledge to manage people on an individual basis.

Interview questions

Suggested questions to improve knowledge of updated potential :

■ Entrepreneurship

- Check through her references to find out how she reacts under pressure.
- Who provided her with the details of her plans and objectives?
- What type of support did she need to achieve her results?
- How many times did she achieve her results using more time or more support than originally planned?
- What was her actual contribution in the achievement of her results?

■ Motivation

- With how much energy and ambition did she achieve her goals?
- Under what conditions?
- What support did she get from her work colleagues and her superiors?
- What key activities did she perform to achieve her goals?
- Ask her what methods she used.

■ Leadership

- What type of supervision has she had?
- What are two or three innovations she has made in previous jobs?
- What additional responsibilities has she assumed on her own?
- Does she really like working on a team?
- Why does she prefer working alone?
- Has she ever had problems with her work colleagues?

■ Interaction style

- Has she ever run away from a conflict of personality?
- How often does she talk to work colleagues?
- When she speaks, is she considered a specialist?
- How does she feel when she is obliged to talk to strangers?

■ Technical orientation

- In the past, has she successfully completed any technical training programs?
- Is she really stimulated by learning the substantial amount of details essential in mastering a subject?
- Is she interested in the technical aspects of business?

Training needs - Sales

Her selling skills are insufficient. The client must have the impression that his needs have been understood, and will be satisfied. To reach this objective, when facing a client, she must:

- obtain information about the client's preferences and concerns;
- give information on her products/services and their advantages; and
- ensure mutual understanding.

	Training and development	
	Required	Not required
Obtain information		
▶ Promote interaction		X
▶ Listen and speak	X	
▶ Interpret	X	
▶ Lead the discussion	X	
▶ Question		X
Provide information		
▶ Consult		X
▶ Adapt approach		X
▶ Attract attention	X	
Verify understanding		
▶ Make oneself understood		X
▶ Clarify / confirm		X
▶ Manage disagreement	X	

Training needs - Sales

■ Obtain information

She has problems obtaining information from the client. She should remember that the client does not usually reveal his needs directly. Often, the client doesn't know what his needs are. A good part of the job consists in identifying and exploring the needs of the client until they are clear to him. Once this is done, she can show the client how these needs can be satisfied by a particular product or service.

Identifying and developing needs is but one way to obtain information from the client. Information concerning his operations, his organization, his methods and his decision-making process also provide important indications about the client's needs, preferences and attitudes. Such information can indicate which product benefits will be important to him. It can determine which application(s) should be emphasized. It can indicate where the customer may want reassurance before making a decision.

- ▶ Her selling technique is interactive. With her two-way communication, she "exchanges" information with the client; this approach helps convince clients, who get involved and take part in seeking solutions and in decision-making.
- ▶ She talks too much. She should question the client and listen a lot more. Talking too much prevents exchanging information. She could lose sales because she does not make enough of an effort to discover the client's priorities and needs.

It is generally safer to lead with a question than a non-stop 'pitch'. If not, the product features she chooses to emphasize, may turn out to be drawbacks!

- ▶ She does not listen carefully and may well misinterpret what she hears. Clients supply many clues about their attitudes, their preferences and their needs. A doubtful expression on the part of the client often signals that a particular advantage is important. She must be alert to these signals and provide the client with necessary reinforcements.

Some objections can reveal needs. If a client objects to a product characteristic, it is a sign that it is important to him. An objection must therefore be considered an opportunity to solve a problem with a client. And even more important, if a client's objection is based on a misunderstanding, she has a unique opportunity to show how an important need can be satisfied by the product.

Unfortunately, 'clue sensitivity' is not something people are born with, but it can be developed. One way is to use a list of expressions of needs ranging from easy-to-recognize to difficult-to-recognize. This list should include expressions often used by a client in the form of objections. It would help her detect the key points in a conversation.

Training needs - Sales

■ Obtain information (cont'd)

- ▶ She tends to control the conversation. She could be in control while letting the client talk. It is possible to change the direction of the conversation at any time, for example, by asking a question that directs the client's attention to a topic of his choice. Or, by summarizing what the client has just said, and then directing him onto a new subject of his choice.

If she lacks confidence in her skills at directing the conversation in this manner, she must rely on different control methods. She can try to limit the client's answers to a simple yes or no, usually by asking questions such as:

- 'Do you agree?'
- 'Don't you agree?'

Usually, however, the client resists such methods. He wants to feel that he is taking part in the conversation equally, even if he is not totally controlling it.

- ▶ She has the ability to ask questions and can make even an indifferent client talk. It is important to start a conversation by asking questions that open up areas of discussion rather than limiting them to what the client has to say. If open questions don't work, one can always ask more specific ones.

Training needs - Sales

■ Provide information

She has mastered certain techniques for providing information; however, her training is incomplete. While some people provide too much information, others provide too little in the mistaken belief that whatever they say will be held against them.

In the eyes of the client, providing information establishes credibility. It creates a positive climate in which thoughts and ideas can be exchanged. Supplying information is an art, as the client must be given assistance in associating the ideas presented and it must be made sure that they are clear.

- ▶ She is consultative. In this way, she establishes a climate of trust with the client.
- ▶ What she says is relevant. She is at ease in justifying costs as well as in discussing the technical specifications of her products. She is able to adapt her presentation according to the knowledge or concerns of the other party.
- ▶ She does not determine in advance what she is going to say to the client. This is an indication that she does not understand one of the basic principles of selling: to obtain information, she must first give information, and she must do so at the beginning of the meeting.

The most important introductory information concerns that with which the client can identify, for example, information relating to needs or problems that the client has experienced. Usually, they are common to the client's industry or field. Information of this kind is more likely to capture and hold the client's attention than gimmicks or slogans.

Training needs - Sales

■ Vérify understanding

She makes sure there is a good understanding with the client. It is not enough to give information and receive it; it must be well understood. It is her responsibility to communicate effectively and she makes sure that her remarks are on target. She uncovers doubts the client may have and brings out all possible objections. In addition, she makes sure that she well understands what the client is telling her. She clarifies and confirms that she has understood.

She recognizes that it is just as easy to misunderstand as it is to be misunderstood in a selling situation.

- ▶ She has a framework for judging her success in convincing a client. She is able to identify specific facts, i.e., certain words that the client has told her and her way of answering them, to support the probability that the client will or won't buy.
- ▶ She is comfortable closing a sale and asking for the order. She sees it as an opportunity to review what she has agreed upon with the client. It is a helpful and reassuring reminder that makes it possible to check the reasons why the client has made the purchase.
- ▶ She perceives objections and doubts as obstacles to the sale rather than as situations that can be analyzed and resolved. Views of objections as obstacles are often intuitive and unfounded. She must guard against interpreting a question by the client as an objection.

Having a list of typical objections and answers to each of these is important. Learning techniques to handle objections is even better. One technique is to clarify the objection before answering it, to ensure that it really is an objection. No product is perfect and no one expects it to be.

Training needs - Strategy/Marketing

She doesn't use enough strategy and could plan her sales calls better. To sell intelligently, it's not enough to know how to approach the client. Very good knowledge of the product and the market is a must as well as the ability to plan activities and steps in the sales procedure; the client's potential must also be evaluated. These are the basic elements and foundation of a productive and successful sales call.

	Training and development	
	Required	Not required
Organization & clientele		
▶ Know the market		X
▶ Know the clientele	X	
▶ Know the services		X
Time management		
▶ Establish priorities		X
▶ Understand procedures	X	
▶ Plan activities		X
Intervention strategy		
▶ Analyze the situation	X	
▶ Know the different steps	X	
▶ Create opportunities	X	

Training needs - Strategy/Marketing

■ Know the organization and clientele

She doesn't know her product and her market well enough. Such knowledge forms the basis of all sales and, all too often, it is incomplete or doesn't go far enough.

- ▶ She invests the efforts required to know not only the features of her products but also the competition as well. She is therefore able to add value to her products and to sell effectively against the image projected by competitors' products.
- ▶ Her knowledge of the various types of clients is too limited for her to be able to recognize their needs and see exactly how the features and advantages of the product can meet them. It would be to her advantage to encourage current clients to give their point of view about what is important.
- ▶ She finds all her products easy to sell. By not "pushing" one product any more than others, she is able to balance her selling.

Training needs - Strategy/Marketing

■ Time management

She could better manage her time. One of the surest ways of improving sales is to allocate selling time properly. Selling is a complex task involving a number of different activities, such as:

- territory planning;
- prospecting;
- travelling;
- face-to-face sales calls;
- after-sales service; and
- writing offers, proposals, etc.

The other necessary tasks, such as completing reports, even if they do not directly contribute toward sales, are an important part of the sales process nonetheless. In view of the many activities to be carried out, it is often difficult to efficiently allocate her time.

- ▶ She sets priorities among her clientele and invests her efforts and energy according to return on investment. She weighs revenue level against the effort required to achieve it.
- ▶ She hasn't mastered all the steps in the selling process. For example, if the client's potential hasn't been evaluated, she runs the risk of wasting her time. She should make a point of evaluating:
 - potential revenues for the client;
 - the client's needs;
 - the client's level of interest; and
 - the probability that the client will purchase.

It is better to complete all these steps in order to properly evaluate the client's potential before investing the time needed to meet with him face to face. Evaluating the potential client by phone is an efficient technique. She can do this by herself or entrust it to someone who is very well trained to do so.

- ▶ She can significantly improve the way she plans her activities. She is aware of the number of her daily activities and the need to use her time well.

Training needs - Strategy/Marketing

■ Intervention strategy

She doesn't use any strategy in approaching a specific client; however, it would be to her advantage to pre-determine what she hopes to accomplish and how she is going to do so. This is how to control a sale rather than let the client control it. Strategy helps measure progress. It indicates where she is in developing clientele and what the next step must be to bring the client nearer to closing the sale.

- ▶ She appears to be omitting some key points. She does not analyze the decision-making process or consider the people who influence this process. It is essential to examine and to understand how and why decisions are made. Participating in a group session on problem solving will help explain why important issues are not resolved and what can be done to avoid such situations.
- ▶ She overlooks certain steps required to bring the client round to closing a sale. If the client is left to himself to decide whether or not to buy, he sometimes has to struggle alone to "sell" the product/service to his superiors or to other members of his organization.

One may decide to blame the client for his indecision; however, it is better to examine how the essential steps can be integrated into the selling cycle, so as to maintain the level of interest from the time of the initial contact to the time the sale is closed.

- ▶ She doesn't know how to increase business from present clients. She tends to look for quick sales and take the cream off the top, overlooking the rest of the opportunities. This can affect her sales. To get into the habit of creating and developing new opportunities with present clients, she could:
 - ask for referrals;
 - introduce new applications; and
 - sell all her products.

Integration guide

Here are a few pointers that will make it easier for this person to assume new responsibilities :

Entrepreneurship

It is of the utmost importance for her to learn to cope with the stress imposed on her by her work structure. It is worthwhile to teach her how to develop her work plan, and to supervise her. Make sure that she masters the specific techniques that are essential for her performance.

Motivation

She likes to create new business opportunities. Even if she is well paid, repetitive work bores her. She definitely has the energy to succeed. She needs to be integrated by someone like herself.

Leadership

It is difficult to integrate her. She demands freedom of action before she earns it. She wants to do everything her own way. An integration period followed by limited supervision is essential for her. It is important to see that she is on the right track.

Interaction style

She definitely requires an integration plan to help her get along with others and survive in her work environment. It is vital that she develops an approach to establish relations with others.

Technical orientation


Her integration plan must be well-defined and adapted to your organization. It must allow her to progress and learn practical aspects at her own pace. She must be directed towards techniques that are essential to learn.


Profile results


It is important to note that there are no good or bad results. The ProfileSoft system measures behaviours that are key to workplace performance; quantified results represent trends.


For additional details, consult our website www.profilessoft.ca, access your client account, click "Tools", then "Interpreting results" and enter results in appropriate boxes.


Results


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Entrepreneurship
(Tendency to plan, organize and respect procedures)

- 65

Motivation
(Tendency to obtain results and desire to help others)

- 85

Leadership
(Tendency to work alone or in a team)

- 13

Interaction style
(Feelings of satisfaction in exchanging ideas with others)

- 22

Technical orientation
(Interest in theory or practice)

25

Predictor
(The predictor is a statistical estimator that identifies the type of functions that best suit each individual)

People with these results are comfortable in staff positions. Their performance possibilities are very good in a non-competitive environment. They may also perform in other work environments. However they will then need more time, effort and energy in order to reach equivalent level of performance and goals.

