

Profile Interpretation Manual

Relationship Product Sales Benchmark



*Signature Profile*

## Benchmark Profile Description

The Relationship Product Sales role is responsible for acquiring new customers and servicing existing ones within an assigned territory/market – usually a 20/80 ratio of new to existing business. They sell the full array of products to buyers who are reasonably expert at using them. They are tasked with advocating for, and providing good service to, their customers, building strong relationships through regular contact and growing sales by uncovering additional buyers within the account and seeking referrals.

## Predictive Competencies

- Overcomes Objections by Addressing Emotional Concerns
- Closes by Building Relationships
- Provides Service by Empathizing with Customer Concerns
- Effectively Communicates in an Informal Manner
- Drives Toward Success by Systematically Managing Accounts
- Expands Relationships and Networks Within Accounts

## Predictive Competencies

### Overcomes Objections by Addressing Emotional Concerns

Focuses on uncovering and resolving the emotional component of customer or prospect barriers to the sale; responds to any hint of concern or complaint that will keep a prospect from buying; takes responsibility for relieving the tension or distress of a prospect; draws on strong empathy for the prospect or customer to offer product alternatives and/or increased personal service to address concerns; is willing to take the heat of a prospect's concerns, believing that keeping the prospect happy is worth future business or goodwill; keeps the customer focused on what can be provided and compensates for objections that cannot be removed with personal support and commitment

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May believe so strongly in the product that there does not appear to be a need to uncover additional concerns</li> <li>▪ Misinterprets unspoken objections as nonexistent objections</li> <li>▪ Dismisses objections without validating the prospect's concerns</li> <li>▪ Does not believe there is a realistic chance to find a mutually satisfying resolution to objections</li> <li>▪ Is argumentative in an effort to overcome versus resolve objections</li> <li>▪ Can take objections personally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intent on uncovering concerns that may prevent customer acceptance of the solution</li> <li>▪ Works hard at being responsive to any hint of concern or complaint that could keep a prospect from buying</li> <li>▪ Promises support or enhancement of, not replacement of, in-house expertise or invention</li> <li>▪ Justifies cost to the organization in terms of superior delivery and added value advantage</li> <li>▪ Takes steps to 'win over' the user as well as the decision maker (when not one in the same)</li> <li>▪ Knows the pros and cons of each offering in the product line to help the customer select the best-fit choice</li> <li>▪ Acts as an advocate for the prospect, offering alternatives when feasible</li> <li>▪ Does not take customer resistance personally</li> </ul>

#### Lower scores may indicate:

- A reluctance to uncover underlying concerns for fear of being seen as too pushy or invasive
- A tendency to take resistance as a personal affront and bring too much emotion into the discussion
- An impatience to get to an agreement so concerns are taken at face value and solutions are suggested before the full extent of the concern is uncovered

## Closes by Building Relationships

Bases an assumptive close on personal friendship and loyalty; focuses more on emotional than logical benefits of the sale, such as what it takes for the individual to meet business goals and get ahead, versus emphasizing cash savings and cost reduction; determines and addresses relevant benefits important to the individual rather than work from a checklist; builds a personal trust and empathy with the customer, securing the purchase decision by becoming a player on their team

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reticent to invest the time needed to cultivate a personal relationship, preferring to emphasize logical over emotional reasons for making the purchase decision</li> <li>▪ Tends to use a standard checklist that ends with asking for the order rather than approach the close by understanding what motivates a customer to sign off on an agreement</li> <li>▪ Waits for customers to come to the conclusion that their needs will be satisfied by the product or service offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Patiently builds a personal relationship that will cement the deal</li> <li>▪ Brings customers to an acceptance of the purchase decision by understanding what they need and addressing issues of specific concern to each customer</li> <li>▪ Accepts a purchase decision on a handshake</li> <li>▪ Makes a personal investment in the client relationship, and builds a mutual trust and loyalty that makes it easier to ask for the order</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- Letting the prospect/customer take control and responsibility for the timing of the selling process; not wanting to be seen as too pushy
- A reticence to spend time building relationships so the focus is almost totally on the logical versus emotional reasons to make a specific purchase

## Provides Service by Empathizing with Customer Concerns

Empathizes with customers who feel they are not getting what they expect; is sensitive to customer concerns and demonstrates a sincere desire to help; listens to the nature of the problem without feeling that it is a personal attack; identifies with the customer's pain and works to relieve it; gives priority to making the customer happy; judges the success of service skills by how the customer feels about the resolution

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May treat the resolution and dismissal of a problem from a list of tasks as more important than the customer's satisfaction with the resolution</li> <li>▪ By personalizing negative input from the customer, adopts a position that is more adversarial than supportive</li> <li>▪ Spotlights own contribution to the solution rather than keep the focus on how the customer feels about the outcome</li> <li>▪ Wants to impress customers with the amount of time and effort that is being expended, focusing more on the process than on finding a solution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Demonstrates loyalty to customers by using their satisfaction as a key performance measure</li> <li>▪ Seeks service solutions that resolve the problem with ease, convenience and minimal disruption to the customer</li> <li>▪ Provides an immediate response, even if just to reassure the customer that the concern has been heard and will be addressed</li> <li>▪ Increases a customer's comfort with communicating problems or dissatisfaction by keeping own emotions in check and absent from the resolution process</li> <li>▪ Asks for customer feedback about a service solution to ensure complete satisfaction and a continuing relationship</li> <li>▪ Believes the ultimate test of a service solution is the customer's happiness with the outcome</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A tendency to try to solve the problem before getting enough information to understand the severity and scope of the issue
- A mechanical or less personal approach to the customer
- A tendency to vary the quality of service depending on the level of personal identification with the specific customer
- A desire to be seen as an equal with difficulty adopting a service orientation

## Effectively Communicates in an Informal Manner

Communicates essential points in an informal and conversational manner; prefers to share information in a one-on-one or small group situation; varies style and language to ensure listener understanding and is attentive to closing the loop on communications; seeks feedback and responds appropriately to listener reactions; makes presentations that are unrehearsed and adapted to individual situations

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May attempt a one-size-fits-all communication style that does not account for different information needs</li> <li>▪ Sticking to a prepared script does not leave any room for customer feedback/reaction or adjustment in the presentation in response to that input</li> <li>▪ Unwilling to risk personal rejection or judgment, they may create an image or persona rather than be natural</li> <li>▪ Keeps the audience at arm's length, making the presentation seem less personal to the customer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sensitive to the customer's circumstances and response, adjusting the communication of information or ideas to accommodate their need to know or level of understanding</li> <li>▪ Encourages questions, comments, and feedback from the customer</li> <li>▪ Backs an informal presentation with professional tools and company guarantees</li> <li>▪ Gives specific details of how/who/when, promising that the complexity of delivery and servicing of the product line will be shouldered by the seller</li> <li>▪ Keeps the focus on content and substance, not flash and performance</li> <li>▪ Creates a presentation that is informal, low-key, and unrehearsed</li> <li>▪ Talks with the customer, creating a team feeling of working together, versus directing a speech at the customer</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A tendency to rely on a very formal presentation style which is not as suitable for intimate groups or easily varied to meet their needs
- A preference for being reactive to questions rather than preparing a presentation of key idea

## Drives Toward Success by Systematically Managing Accounts

Consistently meets or exceeds sales targets through personally controlling the critical aspects of the sales processes; systematically works each account plan and anticipates problems in order to work around them; is driven to win customers' attention and treats their business as an honor, never letting them feel taken for granted

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May adopt a casual or relaxed approach that fails to project personal commitment or dedication</li> <li>▪ Is comfortable with achieving average results, rising above the bottom of the performance chart but not striving to be the best</li> <li>▪ Adopts a more interdependent and team-oriented approach to accomplishing goals</li> <li>▪ May depend too much on fate or 'being in the right place at the right time' rather than plan and work to make things happen</li> <li>▪ Expects account management plan to proceed without the need for careful monitoring and contingencies</li> <li>▪ Can take customer relationships for granted and may not work at continually demonstrating appreciation for the business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meets or surpasses sales goals as a means to gain more freedom and independence</li> <li>▪ Maintains personal control over those aspects of the sales and delivery process identified as top priorities</li> <li>▪ Sets high self-expectations and holds associates to the same stringent standards of dedication</li> <li>▪ Expects to encounter barriers a fair percentage of the time and prepares to deal with setbacks or delays in order to ensure the success of plans</li> <li>▪ Concentrates full energy and attention on systematically accomplishing key tasks</li> <li>▪ Places customers on a pedestal and shows them how valued they are</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A drive for excellence through a more flamboyant or charismatic approach
- A comfort with achieving average results; it is not imperative to be the best, it is important not to be at the bottom of the performance charts
- An expectation that things will go as planned without the need for careful monitoring and contingencies
- A more interdependent and team-oriented approach to accomplishing goal

## Expands Relationships and Networks Within Accounts

Networks throughout an existing customer's organization to identify opportunities for expanding product or service purchases; uses established contacts as a referral base to identify new areas for expanded usage of currently sold products/services and new opportunities for expanded sales offerings; seeks to increase the volume of purchases by establishing relationships with multiple users

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is uncomfortable expanding the contact base within the customer's organization beyond the initial contact</li> <li>▪ Expects the initial or primary customer contact(s) to be the funnel of any additional opportunities within the organization and conducts all business with that contact</li> <li>▪ Takes repeat business for granted and depends upon the customer to initiate additional or altered needs for products or services</li> <li>▪ Focuses on servicing immediate needs at the expense of recognizing and addressing additional or future needs that could be met</li> <li>▪ Inconsistently tracks or reviews consumption, allowing a deterioration of sales cues generated by inventory management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expands relationships to include other potential users in the organization by networking through satisfied contacts</li> <li>▪ Regularly audits customer relationships to uncover opportunities to build a place in the customer 'family' and solicit referral sales from the main contacts</li> <li>▪ Monitors changes in the customer's focus or specifications that would alter the existing business contract</li> <li>▪ Watches for new trends in the industry that could impact customer needs or service capabilities</li> <li>▪ Establishes a plan to deal with the customer's ordering patterns</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A focus on "share of wallet" for currently sold products and a discomfort with expanding the contact base within an organization
- A tendency to let the customer take charge of the order process once the account is established
- A tendency to pigeonhole the customer and not be on the lookout for new applications to sell





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