

## Profile Interpretation Manual

Specialized Solution Sales Benchmark

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*Signature Profile*

## Benchmark Profile Description

The Specialized Solution Sales role is responsible for growing sales of systems or solutions that require significant customization and training to implement. They often support sales of a specific subset of solutions and provide extensive technical expertise to configure the solution. They are typically resident experts who work with the sales team to sell to prospects or existing customers and are not typically bound by territorial, industry, or vertical market constraints.

## Predictive Competencies

- Gains Commitment by Motivating Others
- Identifies and Addresses Customer Needs
- Commits to Continued Professional Development
- Maintains and Shares Market Trend Awareness
- Makes Persuasive Presentations
- Engages Others in Learning to Maximize Benefit from Purchase

## Predictive Competencies

### Gains Commitment by Motivating Others

Assumes an influential role in gaining customer commitment; understands there must be a worthwhile benefit or reward to them; communicates clearly to keep contacts focused on key priorities; generates support or agreement from customers rather than force the purchase of products; understands what customers expect to gain from the relationship and shows them how easy it is to do business

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assumes that all customers share the same goals and fails to distinguish between different needs, motivations, and objectives</li> <li>▪ Lacks a strong desire to take the lead in the selling situation, preferring to be responsive to specific requests</li> <li>▪ Exercises personal control by imposing own will versus attracting customers by finding the most appropriate way to help them succeed</li> <li>▪ Overwhelms customers by introducing too many concurrent strategies, options, or solutions, making it difficult to maintain a clear focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understands the need to be flexible and to provide different solutions based on the varied needs of different roles within the customer organization</li> <li>▪ Takes responsibility for making themselves easy to work with and quick to make customers feel good about their decisions and contributions to the organization</li> <li>▪ Deals diplomatically with negative issues</li> <li>▪ Earns power as a result of the customer choosing to be influenced in the selling arena</li> <li>▪ Keeps communication focused and simple so there is little room for distraction or misunderstandings</li> </ul>

#### Lower scores may indicate:

- A lack of desire to take the lead in a management or selling situation, and a preference for being responsive to specific requests
- A tendency to presume that most people are motivated in the same manner as oneself and treat them accordingly
- A strong need for personal control with a preference to impose one's will versus attract followers by finding the most appropriate way to help them succeed
- A belief that everyone is motivated by pretty much the same things so the same rewards can be equally effective for each report
- A highly motivated individual who expects others to be equally self-driven and focused

## Identifies and Addresses Customer Needs

Seeks to provide an appropriate solution by understanding what the customer is trying to accomplish; spends time in a needs analysis process that identifies key objectives specific to an individual customer; gives the customer's agenda priority over a standard response; changes the sales approach or solution to accommodate the customer versus force fit the customer to an existing model

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lacks a thorough approach to a customer needs analysis, preferring to move immediately to an existing solution</li> <li>▪ Can be distracted from learning customer requirements by the personalities or politics of a situation</li> <li>▪ Tries to fit the customer's methods or goals into a standard model or solution</li> <li>▪ Takes it as personal criticism when suggestions are challenged</li> <li>▪ Can be too invested in own agenda to comfortably yield to the customer's agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asks questions and studies the customer's key priorities</li> <li>▪ Incorporates the customer's responses and input into a business plan tailored to fit that customer's needs</li> <li>▪ Takes the time to explore options or alternatives for helping the customer to achieve key objectives</li> <li>▪ Accepts the rejection or modification of suggestions in an effort to best understand and help the customer</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A tendency to try to get the customer to change their methods or goals in order to better fit the sellers' model or solutions
- A frustration with having suggestions challenged
- A tendency to gloss over the needs analysis process and move quickly to proposing a fairly standard solution

## Commits to Continued Professional Development

Sets job as a top priority and devotes extra hours to skill development; accomplishes objectives dictated by their present position while investing additional time and effort to increase their competence and improve professional standing

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accepts moderate standards for career goals so that time requirements for accomplishing those goals are not excessive</li> <li>▪ External demands on time can limit the attention and resources dedicated to career advancement</li> <li>▪ Prefers to spend all after-work hours in family or social activities rather than designate time for career planning and skill development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Define themselves, to a great extent, by their work and derive personal satisfaction from career success and accomplishments</li> <li>▪ Dedicated to improving professional standing, even at some personal sacrifice</li> <li>▪ Commits time and resources to career advancement by preparing to deal with a wider scope of challenges, even within current position</li> <li>▪ Dedicates some after-hours time to laying the groundwork for developmental activities</li> <li>▪ Continually works to develop the skills and abilities that will support a career progression while devoting the time and resources to be effective in present responsibilities</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A need to segregate work related activities to specified work hours and use non-work time exclusively for leisure
- A preference for a lot of social interaction that is unrelated to a work environment
- A willingness to accept more moderate quality standards for one's personal development so that time requirements for skill development are not excessive

## Maintains and Shares Market Trend Awareness

Stays in touch with market trends, including environmental and competitive forces influencing the market, so that they are seen as a valuable resource to important constituents internal or external to the organization; constantly seeks information that will be useful but is not readily available to colleagues; enjoys being sought for advice and instruction; spends the time to build a base of knowledge that ultimately helps others to be more effective

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May believe they can get by on a cursory understanding of market trends and conditions because its added value to others isn't appreciated</li> <li>▪ Comfortable with present knowledge of the market and may believe the incremental gains that could be achieved by developing knowledge base would not justify the time spent</li> <li>▪ Does not increase understanding of market issues for the purpose of sharing that information with others</li> <li>▪ Assumes customers will utilize their own resources to stay on top of changing market conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Takes professional pride in maintaining an in-depth awareness of market issues</li> <li>▪ Believes there is a benefit to continually building and adding to own knowledge base in market and competitive issues</li> <li>▪ Wants to be prepared to serve as a source of advice and information to customers</li> <li>▪ Updates own market information in order to be of assistance to customers who may not have the time or resources to research changing market trends themselves</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A lack of interest in training or teaching on an individual level
- A preference for providing information through a lecture format more than by hands-on demonstration
- A tendency to rely on a dazzling presentation to cover any inadequacies in content
- A belief that staying current has little added benefit to being a resource to others

## Makes Persuasive Presentations

Excites the customer with an enthusiastic presentation style; demonstrates value and actively promotes products and services by making an emotional appeal; holds the customer's attention and interest by keeping the presentation content relevant; varies style to build toward a buying decision

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ May be more comfortable with establishing a dialogue that emphasizes listening and an exchange of ideas than with making an impact on the audience</li> <li>▪ Uses presentations to entertain rather than inform or persuade</li> <li>▪ Sticks too closely to a script and does not vary the content or emphasis to address the needs of each audience</li> <li>▪ Too focused on the mechanics of the presentation itself to pay attention to audience understanding and concurrence</li> <li>▪ Cannot easily adjust to a nonsupportive audience response and may rush an ineffective presentation just to finish it rather than alter the presentation to change that response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Makes formal presentations that focus on creating an impact while communicating information</li> <li>▪ Has the potential to capture and hold the audience's attention</li> <li>▪ Takes charge and keeps control of the information being communicated through a presentation that is polished and rehearsed</li> <li>▪ Varies style and content to appeal to the audience</li> <li>▪ Projects enthusiasm about a solution to the audience, moving them closer to a buying decision</li> <li>▪ Monitors audience response and adjusts presentation to stay on target</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- Relying on a script or set presentation too much and not varying the content and/or emphasis to match the needs of the audience
- Gives equal emphasis to each benefit even if those listening are only interested in one or two
- Focusing more on speaking and technique than determining if audience understands and is motivated to agree
- May be technically good at "public speaking" to inform or entertain
- May be effective only in situations where the focus is on the product/service rather than the salesperson as the major benefit

## Engages Others in Learning to Maximize Benefit from Purchase

Helps the customer to gain maximum benefit from the product or service by committing to continuous education that provides information updates or product training; prepares more structured sessions to cover the most critical areas of learning; stays on top of information needed by customers in an effort to serve as a resource; takes responsibility for motivating customers to update their information; reinforces shared information through periodic repetition; routinely adjusts education process to address individual and group progress or understanding

LOW SCORES	HIGH SCORES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prefers one-on-one training or a more loosely organized curriculum to the structured requirements of a scheduled class session</li> <li>▪ Expects the people being trained to be self-motivated to learn and becomes impatient when required to repeat or reinforce already covered information</li> <li>▪ Does not implement a tracking process for assessing the effectiveness of teaching efforts or the progress of trainees</li> <li>▪ Enjoys working on content delivery and may be more concerned with the audience's assessment of own public speaking skills than with the subject matter</li> <li>▪ Tries to make the training entertaining at the expense of providing only relevant information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prepares scheduled and consistent programs to train or educate others</li> <li>▪ Establishes measurable criteria for assessing progress in the learning process</li> <li>▪ Demonstrates patience and a willingness to repeat or reinforce ideas and information until the audience understands</li> <li>▪ Focuses training sessions on those competencies that will make a difference in the group's ultimate effectiveness</li> <li>▪ Concentrates more on the results produced or change accomplished through training than with how attractive or entertaining the training can be</li> </ul>

### Lower scores may indicate:

- A tendency to rush through the training without gauging how much is being absorbed or retained by the group
- More of a preference for one-on-one coaching and/or more free form curriculum than formal class sessions
- A preference for a more off-the-cuff training style





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