

OPRA

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SPI

SALES PREFERENCE INDICATOR

Technical Manual

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sales Preference Indicator (SPI) was originally designed to measure 11 core dimensions of sales activity. These dimensions or 'factors' were conceived on the basis of a thorough literature review, an analysis of currently available sales tools, and quantitative performance data from our client pool.

Not all factors predictive of sales were included in this analysis as some variables were related more generically to the concept of 'performance' rather than selling (ie poor problem solving ability has been found to contribute to a drop in performance, including sales performance).

It was the intention of test authors to design the SPI as a supplement to more comprehensive personality tools such as the OPP and 15FQ which have also been found to measure aspects of sales performance. In particular, one's *locus of control* (Badovick, 1990) and *conscientiousness* (Barrick and Mount, 1991) have been well documented in the literature. Cognitive predictors such as verbal ability (Bagozzi, 1978) have also been excluded from the SPI.

The 11 dimensions of sales activity originally included in the SPI were:

Belief in Sales:

The extent to which an individual has emotionally bought into a career in sales;

Adaptive Selling:

(Spiro & Weitz, 1990)

The degree to which an individual is willing and able to adjust their selling style when dealing with different clients;

Emotional Objectivity:

(McBane, 1995)

The ability to empathise with the client and/or customer's situation without buying into their scepticism, distrust or any other negative emotion;

Customer Orientation:

(Sharma & Levy, 1995)

The ability to quickly develop comfort and trust with a client;

Customer Service:

The willingness to go the extra mile for a client and/or customer in the delivery of work output;

Handling Anxiety:

(Strutton, Pelton, & Lumpkin, 1995; Bagozzi, 1978)

The capacity to handle stressful situations and focus attention on positive outcomes and restrict negative self-talk;

Networking:

The willingness to use one's own personal and professional contacts to help open doors and advance opportunities;

Telephone Reluctance:

(Dudley, Goodson, & Barnett, 1995)

The degree to which a person will struggle when required to use a telephone as a prospecting tool;

Organisational Commitment:

(Brett, Cron & Slocum, 1995)

The degree to which an individual places importance on being supported by the organisation and their commitment to work colleagues;

Teamwork:

(Puffer, 1987)

The willingness to work with others, to share ideas, resources and generally assist others in their sales activity;

Social Desirability:

(Crowne and Marlow, 1964)

The extent to which a person has tried to present an overly favourable impression of themselves when answering the questionnaire.

Between 40-60 questions were generated for each scale of the original SPI. This number was then reduced to 10-16 items per scale, which were trialed with over 200 sales staff from a number of public and private sector organisations.

INITIAL ANALYSIS AND FACTOR ANALYSIS

An initial item and correlation analysis of the scales found that there were some scales which had quite high internal consistency such as Networking (Cronbach's alpha .87) while some were quite low (ie Customer Orientation at .49). On average, most scales had internal consistencies between .65 and .80.

Further analysis of the correlations between scales showed that many scales were not independent. For instance, the Networking scale correlated .48 with the Belief in Sales scale. It's correlation with four of the other 11 scales was also over .40. These results were highlighted by a principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation.

Looking at the results of the 11 factor solution many hypothesised scales came out as highly robust scales:

Networking, Social Desirability, and Emotional Objectivity presented the strongest factor structure, while scales such as Adaptive Selling and Teamwork loaded heavily on more than one factor. A few scales did not load particularly highly on any single factor such as Customer Service.

A number of other factor solutions were also investigated and a process of item reduction was then undertaken. Specifically, a range of factor solutions were analysed and items removed from the SPI if they loaded heavily on more than one scale or if they did not load on any scale over a number of factor solutions.

From this process the number of scales were reduced from 11 to 7 and the total number of items in the questionnaire reduced to 68.

The scales that largely remained the same with only minor changes were:

- Adaptive Selling
- Emotional Objectivity
- Networking
- Social Desirability

A number of questionnaire items loaded on more than one factor. These factors were renamed to take into account the changing nature of scale items:

Sales Persona:

included handling anxiety and customer service items;

Organisational Focus:

included organisational commitment and a few team working items;

Competitive:

included team working and a few handling anxiety items.

The Scales that were removed were:

Telephone Reluctance:

this loaded mainly on the Networking scale (correlating .48) and the Emotional Objectivity scale (correlating .42);

Belief in Sales:

did not hold as a single factor and correlated over .25 with five of the six SPI scales. In particular, it loaded highly on the Networking scale (correlating .46);

Customer Orientation:

did not hold as a single factor and loaded mainly on the Emotional Objectivity scale (correlating .62);

Customer Service:

did not hold up as a single factor with only four of the customer service questions making the final cut.

FACTOR STRUCTURE

	Factor AS	Factor EO	Factor SP	Factor NW	Factor Org	Factor Com	Factor SD
ZAS18_	.614						
AS40_	.599						
AS51_	.570						
AS84_	.540				.389		
AS73_	.532					.304	
AS106_	.456						
TM44_	.453						
AS95_	.451						
AS62_	.440						
AS7_	.410						
EO10_		.701					
EO105_		.690					
EO94_		.687					
EO21_		.624					
E087_		.612					
EO72_		.592					
EO76_		.556					
EO109_		.530					
EO24_		.479					
EO152_		.475					
ZCS80_			.582				
HA68_			.523				
CS3_			.514				
HA46_			.505				
HA79_			.469				
CO39_			.422				
HA122_			.416				
TR81_			.406				
BS78_			.405				
CS36_			.331				
NW71_				.777			
NW115_				.743			
NW82_				.719			
NW27_				.697			
NW93_				.691			
NW16_				.664			
NW60_				.629			
NW125_				.562			
NW49_				.545			
NW38_				.541			
OC128_					.717		
OC64_					.688		
OC97_					.681		
OC53_					.659		
TM147_					.623		
ZOC75_					.519		
TM22_					.517		
OC138_					.504		
TM99_					.449		
TM11_					.441		
AS127_						-.600	
NW154_				-.364		-.549	
TM130_				-.308		-.542	
TM55_						-.518	
HA2_						-.517	
TM110_						-.514	
TM156_						-.488	
HA112_		-.312				-.465	
CS102_						-.353	
SD85_							.643
SD96_							.635
SD74_							.627
SD52_							.616
SD63_							.608
SD107_							.567
SD19_							.431
SD41_							.392
CS123_							.382
Expl.Var	3.382	4.676	3.080	5.433	4.442	3.142	3.400
Prp.Totl	5.0%	6.9%	4.5%	8.0%	6.5%	4.6%	5.0%

Table 1: Factor structure of the SPI

The above table provides a summary of the factor structure of the SPI. The item labels correspond to the original questionnaire and the scales from which these questions came from. Of note is the fact that only 5 of the questions had any degree of double loading (i.e. eigen values of over 0.3). Networking was the strongest factor explaining 8% of the variance.

RELIABILITY

Internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) were computed for a sample of 225 participants. Table 2 documents these coefficients, number of items per scale and mean 'corrected' item-total correlations (ITC) for each scale.

The ITC's index the mean association between items within a scale and the scale score itself. Each individual item-scale score coefficients is corrected for the inflation of the coefficient due to the items inclusion in the scale score.

The Networking factor had the highest internal consistency among the SPI scales as shown on Table 2. These internal consistency reliabilities are probably an overestimate of the true internal consistencies as scale items were selected and rejected in part on the basis of their individual ITC and factor score.

This process means that when the SPI is subjected to a replication study the alpha's and ITC's are likely to be smaller.

SPI Scale	No. of Items	Alpha	ITC	Mean	SD
Adaptive Selling	10	.74	.40	37.42	4.75
Emotional Objectivity	10	.82	.51	30.07	6.48
Sales Persona	10	.66	.33	32.37	5.17
Networking	10	.87	.59	34.63	6.80
Organisational Focus	10	.80	.49	44.12	3.44
Competitive	9	.73	.41	25.71	4.80
Social Desirability	9	.75	.42	29.20	5.90

Table 2: Internal reliability of the SPI

The correlations between the scales of the SPI are shown in Table 3. While the scales are largely independent of each other, there are 4 of the 21 pairs that correlate more than 0.3 (.31 to .37).

	AS	EO	SP	NW	Org	Com	SD
Adaptive Selling (AS)	1.00	.22	.25	.15	.31	-.01	-.14
Emotional Objectivity (EO)	.22	1.00	.22	.32	-.03	-.34	-.07
Sales Persona (SP)	.25	.22	1.00	.19	.14	-.14	-.10
Networking (NW)	.15	.32	.19	1.00	.18	-.37	-.05
Organisational Focus (Org)	.31	-.03	.14	.18	1.00	-.07	.20
Competitive (Com)	-.05	-.31	-.12	-.37	-.11	1.00	.06
Social Desirability (SD)	-.14	-.07	-.10	-.05	.20	.08	1.00

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of the scales in the SPI

POSITIVE-NEGATIVE BALANCE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The overall balance of positive scoring to reverse scored (negative) questions in the SPI is near to equal (35 to 33 respectively). It is acknowledged, however, that this varies across the different scales.

The 'overall rating', reported on the SPI profile chart will be relatively free of a positive-negative response bias drift, (i.e. a respondent's tendency to either exclusively use the positive or negative end of the scale). It is based on responses to the 6 scales excluding social desirability.

VALIDATION OF THE SPI

CRITERION VALIDATION STUDY

An initial validation study was conducted which compared self-ratings on the SPI with performance data from a multi-national organisation with a robust performance management system. The sample groups covered were retail sales staff and sales consultants.

This data was subject to statistical analysis and significant correlations were found with the following measures of performance:

Retail Sales Staff: N = 47-65

Criterion Measure	Correlation	Significance level
Sales Persona with Sales Figures	r = .39	p<0.01
Competitive with Sales Figures	r = .35	p<0.05
Adaptive Selling with Re-employment	r = .27	p<0.05
Manager rating of overall sales performance	r = .27	p<0.05

Table 4: Correlation of the SPI scales with retail sales staff performance

Sales Consultants: N = 54

Criterion Measure	Correlation	Significance level
Adaptive Selling with Position	r = .41	p<0.005
Adaptive Selling with Salary	r = .29	p<0.05
Networking with position	r = .38	p<0.005
Organisational Focus with Position	r = .36	p<0.01
Organisational Focus with Salary	r = .43	p<0.001
Competitive with Position	r = .30	p<0.05

Table 5: Correlation of the SPI scales with sales consultants' performance

Sales Consultants and Retail Sales Staff combined: N = 104-125

Criterion Measure	Correlation	Significance level
Adaptive selling with Salary	r = .19	p<0.05
Networking with Position	r = .19	p<0.05
Networking with Salary	r = .19	p<0.05
Organisational Focus with Position	r = .26	p<0.01
Organisational Focus with Salary	r=.21	p<0.05
Competitive with Salary	r = .20	p<0.05
Competitive with overall Manager rating	r = -.20	p<0.05
Social Desirability with overall standardised Performance rating	r =.26	p<0.01

Table 6: Correlation of SPI scales with sales consultants and retail sales staff combined.

SPI CORRELATIONS WITH VMI AND OPP

The aforementioned criterion validation study included the Values and Motives Inventory (VMI) for one group and the Occupational Personality Profile (OPP) for both Sales Consultants and Retail Sales Staff. From that source the following significant correlations were found between the SPI - VMI and the SPI - OPP scales.

Sales Consultants (n=54)

SPI	VMI	Correlation
Overall Score	Independence	-0.42**
	Ethical – faith	-0.27 *
	Affiliation	0.42**
	Security	-0.57**
Adaptive Selling	Independence	-0.33 *
	Affiliation	0.35**
	Security	-0.38**
	Acquiescence	-0.29 *
Emotional Objectivity	Achievement	-0.32 *
	Security	-0.32 *
	Acquiescence	-0.38**
Sales Persona	Moral	-0.30 *
	Affiliation	0.28 *
	Security	-0.31 *
	Acquiescence	-0.41**
Networking	Independence	-0.42**
	Affiliation	0.50**
	Security	-0.29 *
	Social Desirability	0.27 *
Organisational Focus	Moral	0.39**
	Affection	0.29 *
	Central Tendency	-0.42**
Competitive	Ethical - faith	-0.30 *
	Achievement	0.27 *
	Security	-0.56**
Social Desirability	Security	0.30 *
	Social Desirability	0.52**

Significance level: 0.05 * 0.01**

Table 7: SPI Correlations with Values and Motives Inventory (VMI)

Sales Consultants & Retail Sales Staff (n=115)

SPI	OPP	Correlation
Overall Score	Assertive	0.42**
	Flexible	0.26**
	Trusting	0.21 *
	Phlegmatic	0.53**
	Gregarious	0.43**
	Persuasive	0.56**
	Contesting	-0.24 *
	Pessimistic	-0.36**
Adaptive Selling	Assertive	0.19 *
	Flexible	0.29**
	Trusting	0.22 *
	Phlegmatic	0.32**
	Gregarious	0.27**
	Persuasive	0.35**
	Pessimistic	-0.42**
	Mid range responding	-0.19 *
Emotional Objectivity	Assertive	0.27**
	Flexible	0.28**
	Phlegmatic	0.67**
	Gregarious	0.24**
	Persuasive	0.25**
	Contesting	-0.23 *
	Pessimistic	-0.24 *
Sales Persona	Persuasive	0.20 *
Networking	Assertive	0.20 *
	Trusting	0.20 *
	Phlegmatic	0.24 *
	Gregarious	0.42**
	Persuasive	0.44**
	Contesting	-0.21 *
	Pessimistic	-0.21 *
Organisational Focus	Assertive	0.32**
	Gregarious	0.19 *
	Persuasive	0.29**
	Pessimistic	-0.22 *
	Mid range responding	-0.43**
Competitive	Assertive	0.36**
	Phlegmatic	0.28**
	Persuasive	0.35**
Social Desirability	Flexible	-0.31**
	Social Desirability	0.55**

Significance level: 0.05 * 0.01**

Table 8: SPI correlations with Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPP)
Data from criterion validation study.

ANECDOTAL FEEDBACK AND INFORMAL REVIEWS

Secondary validation was obtained by anecdotal feedback and informal reviews by the managers of existing call centre staff and sales representatives. Their SPI profiles were compared to performance and known attributes.

Comparison of SPI profiles with information obtained from the interview and other sources was also made on call centre staff, sales representatives and senior consultants undergoing selection.

The pattern of high correlations apparent at this level was uniformly rated as 'impressive' by the private sector organisations that participated in SPI prototype trials.

Norms

COMPOSITE NORM GROUP

At the date of publication, the initial New Zealand composite norm group had 280 records. This group was made up of retail sales staff, call centre sales staff, sales consultants/representatives and senior consulting staff for whom selling is a significant part of the role.

Updated norms are being released as the database evolves. The composite norm group now stands at 637 records. Smaller, more specific reference groups are available, on application, for users of the SPI. As these become sufficiently larger in size, they will be published in norm updates.

THE SCALES OF THE SPI

OVERALL RATING

A generic sales model has been compiled on the basis of literature and the limited sample of performance data in the criterion validation study reported earlier in this manual. The overall rating is based on responses to the six SPI scales excluding the response style indicators.

This leads to the tentative hypothesis of a score to the left suggesting modest sales potential and a score to the right suggesting potential for high sales performance.

In all cases these suggestions are subject to other factors such as training, skills, experience, motivation and the requirements of the specific role in question.

The sample is not large enough nor sufficiently broad for this rating to be any more than a preliminary indicator, which may well be amended and refined as more data comes to hand.

As with other psychometric indicators, proper use of the SPI in selection entails cross-referencing with information from other sources where possible, such as work history, interview and referees.

Consistent Approach

- They adopt a consistent approach to dealing with all clients
- Tend to value security and seek to minimise risk
- Focus on own agenda
- Tend to promote their own ideas or opinions
- May believe they have limited control over what happens to them in life

Left scorers will typically present themselves in the same way to all people. They will tend to adopt or develop systems and routines to assist them in their work. Believing that Sales is a routine, repetitive occupation, they may see little value in adjusting their presentation to suit each audience. Believing that all clients can be treated in the same way, they may often leave the impression that they do not listen or understand a client's business.

These people will tend to focus less on 'reading' the client's needs or feelings and more on their own. They may achieve limited empathy. Often, they will be prepared to promote their own ideas and opinions and can come across as being quite direct and forthright. Such an approach will increase the possibility of disagreements and conflicts developing and can also increase the risk of client issues going unresolved.

These people may experience a degree of inner anxiety and self doubt. They may believe they have limited control over what happens to them in life. They may be inclined to attribute failures to bad luck or factors outside their control.

Adaptive Selling

- They adjust selling style to suit the needs of the client
- Tend to like variety and may take some risks
- Focus on 'reading' the client's needs
- Tend to build rapport
- May have a strong belief in their own ability to determine their destiny

Right scorers appreciate that people will often buy from others who are like themselves and who share their views and beliefs. As such, these people will generally adapt their approach to selling to fit the needs of the recipient and will not simply push their own ideas or opinions. Instead, they will convey those beliefs that they consider to be shared by others. They will tend to establish good rapport.

Such an approach will minimise the possibility of disagreements or conflicts developing. It will also mean that client issues are likely to be addressed.

Possibly diplomatic and guarded, these people will consider the impact of what they say or do on others and will make an effort to read the non-verbal cues that a client presents. They tend to make an effort to monitor and modify their behaviour in the presence of people in a way that will benefit their position.

Tending to have a fundamental faith in their own ability to determine the events around them, these people will expect success more than failure.

These people also tend like variety and may be open to some degree of risk. They may adapt and change their approach to avoid it becoming routine or mundane. A possibility with extreme right scorers is that they may have difficulty adhering to company standards and procedures. They may also be prone to over-promising.

EMOTIONAL OBJECTIVITY

Emotional Connection

- They find it difficult to distance themselves from the emotion of the client
- Are more likely to take an initial 'no' from the client as meaning 'no'
- May struggle to turn a client around who is initially less than receptive towards what they are offering
- Tend to take things personally when a sale goes wrong

Left scorers tend to be sensitive to the emotion that is being exhibited by an existing or prospective client (be it positive or negative). They find it difficult to distance themselves from the emotions of others they are dealing with. In turn, this tends to determine whether or not a sale will be made.

If the client is initially not interested in what is being presented, the low scorer will tend to accept this as given, rather than strive to change the circumstances. Conversely, if the client is receptive to the product or service that is being presented, the low scorer will feed off this positively and for at least a short while, feel secure in their career choice.

How good they feel about themselves and the receptiveness of their client base will be strongly related to their sales success at any one time. They may focus on the details of the moment rather than standing back and analysing at a distance.

Because they are easily affected by the emotions of others, these people can experience quite dramatic mood swings and at the extreme, could come across as being both touchy and somewhat volatile. At times, they will feel full of energy and on other occasions, may come across as flat and lifeless.

Emotional Objectivity

- Can switch off from the emotion of the client
- Will take an initial 'no' from the client as meaning 'not now'
- Will persevere in order to turn a client around who is initially less than receptive towards what they are offering
- Tend not to take things personally when a sale goes wrong

Right scorers tend to remain objective in emotional situations and are able to distance themselves from the emotion that is being exhibited by an existing or prospective client (be it positive or negative).

These people tend to be resilient, emotionally stable and are rarely flustered by difficult situations. They will remain composed and tend to believe that their actions determine outcomes.

Actively striving to overcome difficulties, these people will expect success more than failure. They will take resistance from the client as a sign that they simply have to persevere in order to find a way. When dealing with a difficult client, they will tend to respond to criticism or negativity in a constructive manner and not see it as a personal attack.

They should have sufficient energy and enthusiasm to cope with demanding situations and believe that their persistence and effort will pay off in the end. They may be quite spontaneous and adventurous in their endeavours.

At the extreme, these people may not always know when to give up and invest their energies in more profitable pursuits.

SALES PERSONA

Sales Persona - Quiet

- Reserved and quiet
- Have a more structured personality
- May lack social confidence and struggle with group presenting
- Slow to build rapport with the client

Left scorers enjoy their own company and as such, may prefer to take their time when it comes to building relationships with new clients. In a sales focused organisation, they are more often found behind the scenes and may shy away from situations that require constantly meeting new people.

Even though these people may not be strong at generating new business opportunities, they can often make good account managers and grow a client base once the initial relationship has been established.

They tend to be structured in their approach to sales communications and prefer to be well prepared before contacting prospective clients.

Feeling uncomfortable if cast into the social spotlight, these people will prefer to mull over information in advance of sharing their ideas with others and therefore may be mismatched with clients who are very action focused, talkers.

Sales Persona - Outgoing

- Outgoing and sociable
- Have a more flexible personality
- Enjoy meeting new clients and will thrive on being in the social spotlight
- Are quick to build rapport with the client

Right scorers are likely to achieve higher sales success because they enjoy spending time with other people, are more outgoing, and genuinely enjoy meeting and dealing with new people.

Because these people choose to spend time with others, they can develop people reading skills faster than their low scoring counterparts, which in turn will foster the client relationship and from which, sales success tends to come.

They may have a need for social contact and are suited to working in a role that requires them to liaise, network and initiate relationships with others. They are often skilled at putting people quickly at ease in their company and should not shy away from group presenting.

At the extreme, these people may come across as being overly self-assured, arrogant and superior and will need to watch that they do not distance other more reflective, reserved clients as a result. Sometimes learning to curb their gregariousness can be to their advantage and ensure that they do not come across as being too 'over the top'.

NETWORKING

Separate Networks

- Tend not to do business with friends or family
- Tend to keep personal and work life separate
- Won't feel comfortable with referral selling
- May consider good networkers 'unethical' or 'unprofessional'
- May rarely find enjoyment in their sales successes
- Are likely to find telephoning prospective clients and clients difficult
- Fear loss of approval from significant others in their lives (parents, friends, spouse)
- Do not tend to have a high belief in sales as a vocation

Left scorers tend not to use their personal and professional contacts to help advance their career. For these people, the most common excuse is that 'business and pleasure do not mix'.

These people negatively anticipate how their friends and family will react if they were to make a sales call on them or ask for a referral. They presume their friends and family will feel offended or exploited and do not want to jeopardise the relationship.

They will often hesitate to give the names of family members or friends to other sales people and can take longer to develop a stable base of prospects as a result.

Given their reluctance to network, They are also more likely to shy away from using the telephone as a networking tool and will compensate by finding networking opportunities that don't require using the phone.

They typically do not have a lot of belief in selling as a worthwhile profession and will seldom take real pride in their successes.

Integrated Networks

- Will do business with friends and family
- See personal and work life as an integrated whole
- Can use referrals to open up new doors
- Do not consider networking 'unethical' or 'unprofessional'
- Will find enjoyment in their sales successes
- Should not find telephoning prospective clients and clients difficult
- Do not fear a loss of approval from significant others in their lives (parents, friends, spouse)
- Tend to believe in the value of sales as a vocation

Right scorers do not typically have a problem calling on friends and family to help create new selling prospects or asking them for referrals.

They are unlikely to experience any difficulty calling on this group and feel no need to isolate these people from the sales process. Believing that family and friends will take them seriously, these people see no difficulty in delivering a sales presentation to significant others in their lives.

They tend not to experience emotional discomfort about using the telephone as a networking tool and as such, tend to build a networking base quicker than their peers.

Given the belief they have in what they are doing, they are likely to take pride in a selling career and are unlikely to feel any guilt or shame about being associated with such a vocation.

ORGANISATIONAL FOCUS

Self Focus

- They focus on their rewards rather than emphasising support and trust
- Are concerned about doing what is in their own best interests
- Tend to keep information to themselves
- May tend to base their behaviour on their own feelings and attitudes at the time

Left scorers tend to be more interested in achieving their own successes and rewards than working for the good of the wider organisation. They tend to be self-reliant and believe that to be successful, you need to 'go it alone'. The reputation of the organisation may hold little importance to them. They are not particularly concerned about the level of trust between themselves and the organisation.

These people are particularly effective in environments that give them a great deal of autonomy and freedom. They tend to define their own principles and values. They may be quite flexible and expedient in this area. They prefer to base their behaviour on their own feelings and attitudes at the time. They may become demotivated if they feel themselves being stifled by organisational processes and procedures.

They will tend to keep a lot of information to themselves. They may believe that group decision making is a waste of time or disadvantageous to them. On the surface, they can come across as committed to the team and wider organisation, yet still engage in very self-focused, self-interested activity behind the scenes. They tend to pay lip-service to the values of the organisation.

Organisational Focus

- They place importance on trusting and being supported by the organisation
- Are concerned about the reputation of the organisation and respect
- Focus on group results, sharing information with their colleagues
- Tend to value integrity and compliance with organisational values

Right scorers appreciate that the reputation of the company in which they work is important and will make an effort to abide by organisational values in their day-to-day dealings with prospects and clients.

They tend to hold true to such values as 'respect' and 'trust' and will try to uphold these values in both their internal and external liaison with others. They are likely to have a high level of integrity. They prefer to work in an organisation with a good reputation and will seek to uphold it and build on it.

Given the choice, they will prefer also to work in a cohesive team environment and will do their best to contribute to the productivity and morale of the group.

Tending to subscribe to the view that people in an organisation will benefit from mutual support, they will give information to colleagues that may help them, and expect the same in return. They tend to be conscious of the wider context of their own role in the organisation. They will consider selling opportunities for other parts of the business when they are meeting with a client. They are not likely to feel threatened by sharing client accounts.

COMPETITIVE

Cooperative

- Tend to have a cooperative attitude towards work
- Are open sharing success with others
- Tend to play it safe and avoid undue risk
- May struggle to get closure on a sale and may shy away from directly asking the client for their business
- Tend to be open and sincere

Left scorers generally adopt a cooperative approach to work, they are open to sharing success with others and tend to find it easier to work in a team.

While they may like to succeed and get ahead in their career, they can acknowledge others to be equally as competent and are not averse to celebrating the successes of their peers. They tend to value cooperation and may actively seek and give help within a team environment.

These people tend to value security and minimise risk. This may lead them to consult with colleagues before taking major initiatives or decisions. They will also tend to work inside the systems and processes that the organisation has in place for their success.

Often, they will prefer to build the client relationship in a gradual manner and without the pressure of specific sales targets and weekly budgets to meet. They tend to be open and sincere in their dealings with prospective clients, and are therefore likely to be trusted.

Encouraging them to assertively ask for the business and close a sale can be met with resistance since this might feel to them to be pushy and aggressive. Typically, these people will emphasise the rapport-building, relationship element of selling rather than that of assertively prospecting and closing a sale.

Often being team oriented, the success of these people will depend, in part on being surrounded by supportive colleagues and they may become less energetic if left to work on sales accounts by themselves. At the extreme, these people may struggle to make their own decisions.

Competitive

- Typically are very competitive
- Prefer to work on their individual targets
- Have a strong drive to excel in what they do, will take risks and push themselves
- Tend to be self assured and find it easy to ask for the business
- Tend to be perceptive and able to steer events a deliberate way

Right scorers are typically very competitive people who are high achievers. They tend to prefer to work individually, focused on their own sales targets. They find that they can achieve their best results that way.

Having a strong competitive drive, they will typically have little difficulty assertively asking for the business and seeking closure with a client. They tend to be persistent in the pursuit of a sale. They tend to not worry about the prospect of being seen as too pushy or aggressive and will see sales targets as being something to beat.

Having a strong drive to excel in what they do, these people will typically push themselves and do whatever it takes to be the best. In some cases this may extend to bending the rules in order to achieve the results they are after. They tend to dislike being beaten. Recognition and career success tends to be a strong motivator for them. They are often prepared to take risks and to give anything a go.

Believing themselves to be largely responsible for their own successes, these people tend to work on their own and will not seek out the input of others when decision making. Often being seen as self-assured and self-reliant, these people tend to focus strongly on their own success.

They may also be perceptive of the demands of the situation and be able to steer events a deliberate way to achieve the result they want. If coupled with an outgoing sales persona, they may be quite compelling and convincing.

Extreme right scorers may show very little inclination towards teamwork, regarding it as detracting from their own capacity for achievement.

SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

The social desirability scale of the SPI is not a predictor of sales success, but instead, is designed to give an indicator of one's approach (ie attitude) to taking the sales test. When interpreting an individual's scores on each dimension of the SPI, it is important to look at these scores in relation to their Social Desirability rating.

Research has demonstrated that simply by mentioning the existence of a distortion scale within a test, that the incidence of distortion will be reduced.

Left scorers are generally unconcerned about how they are seen by others and will adopt a more 'take me as I am' attitude regardless of social expectations. They tend to be true to themselves and are not afraid of presenting themselves 'warts and all'. Extreme left scores may indicate a tendency to be tough on themselves.

Right scorers on this dimension tend to have a strong need for social approval and may attempt to present an unrealistically positive image of themselves to others in order to gain recognition. That is to say, they do not admit to sharing the weaknesses or bad habits that are characteristic of most people. An alternative explanation is that they are extremely conscientious and honest.

The challenge in interpreting the Social Desirability scale of the SPI is to identify whether the right scorers have tried to deliberately distort the results or whether this is an accurate reflection of who they are. It would be expected for an individual who is heavily engaged in charitable activities and/or other self-sacrificing work to have a score to the right hand side of this scale. Similarly, a highly moral or strongly ethical upbringing that has been adopted fully by the person can yield right side scores. Strongly right-hand scores require further probing in order to determine what they mean.

CENTRAL TENDENCY

This scale measures the degree of opting for the middle rating or use of the range of ratings to the questionnaire.

Left scorers have followed the instructions more than most and used the range of ratings provided, avoiding the middle answer ("in between"). They tend to have definite views about things and may have a high level of self awareness.

Right scorers have used an unusually high proportion of middle ratings which may indicate a cautious approach to test taking, perhaps being unwilling to disclose too much about themselves at this stage. They may, however, genuinely have mild views about most things and be able to see both sides of issues. Far right-hand side scores may indicate a reduced level of self awareness and diminish the validity of the profile.

ACQUIESCENCE

This scale measures the extent to which "Agree" or "Disagree" options were selected. Scores to the extreme left or right indicate a disproportionate bias towards one response set and reduce the validity of the profile.

Left scorers have opted disproportionately for the "disagree" answer on the questionnaire. An extreme left-hand score may indicate a tendency to disagree or debate in general, and warrants further inquiry.

Right scorers have opted disproportionately for the "agree" answer on the questionnaire. An extreme right-hand score may indicate a tendency to agree and not make waves in general, possibly seeking to keep on-side with the speaker, but not reflecting their true opinions. Again, an extreme right-hand score warrants further inquiry.

Sales Preference Indicator (SPI)

This questionnaire is designed to clarify your preferences in areas that relate to sales and consulting activity. It can help identify ways in which you are motivated with respect to selling behaviour.

Instructions

This questionnaire consists of a series of statements on which you are asked to rate yourself according to how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Make your response by blackening out the box on the answer sheet that corresponds to each question in the booklet. Please do not mark this booklet.

For example :

strongly agree	agree	in between	disagree	strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. I find it easy to relate to people

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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In this example the person strongly agreed that they found it easy to relate to people and therefore blackened out box number 1.

Please bear the following points in mind when completing this questionnaire:

- **Answer as honestly as you can.** We are interested in getting an accurate picture of your preferences. Please note that your profile will be cross-referenced with information from other sources and that this questionnaire does detect overly positive self promotion.
- Please answer in the **context of your work life**.
- **Try to avoid the middle** (in between) answer as much as possible.
- There is no time limit but you should endeavour to answer each question as **quickly and spontaneously** as you can. Your first instinctive response is generally the most accurate.
- Please answer **every question**, even those that do not seemingly apply to you.
- If you wish to change your answer, erase it and mark another.
- You may start now.

SPI PROFILE CHART

Sales Preference Indicator (SPI)

Name Surname

Date

LEFT SCORE	Mid range	RIGHT SCORE
OVERALL RATING Generic sales model suggests modest sales performance, subject to other factors such as skills, experience, motivation and role requirements	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	OVERALL RATING Generic sales model suggests potential for high sales performance, subject to other factors such as skills, experience, motivation and role requirements
PROFILE		
CONSISTENT APPROACH Believes in using a standard approach, focuses on prepared agenda, seeks to minimise risk, promotes own ideas	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	ADAPTIVE SELLING Believes in adapting their approach, adjusts quickly to the needs of the client, likes variety, may take risks, builds rapport
EMOTIONAL CONNECTION Easily affected by the emotions of others, reacts to the emotions of clients, find it difficult to persevere in the face of "No"	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	EMOTIONAL OBJECTIVITY Remains objective in emotional situations, not diverted by client's emotions or initial reluctance
SALES PERSONA - QUIET Reserved and quiet, has somewhat "structured" personality, slow to build rapport but maintains contacts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	SALES PERSONA - OUTGOING Outgoing and sociable, enjoys meeting new people, flexible, builds rapport quickly
SEPARATE NETWORKS Prefers to keep business and personal life separate, possible phone reluctance, mixed feelings about sales	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	INTEGRATED NETWORKS Is prepared to sell within own networks and to friends and family, uses telephone, belief in sales
SELF-FOCUS Focused on own rewards and best interests, tends not to share information	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	ORGANISATIONAL FOCUS Company reputation is important, values respect and trust, thinks of the organisation, shares information
CO-OPERATIVE Tends to work co-operatively and help others, more careful, open and sincere, relationship selling	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	COMPETITIVE Highly competitive, achievement focus, own targets, likely to take risks, assertive in closing
RESPONSE STYLE INDICATOR		
AS THEY ARE Answered honestly, take me as you find me – faults and all, possibly tough on self	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	POSITIVE BIAS OR VERY CONSCIENTIOUS Tendency to present self in favourable light, or is extremely conscientious
EXTREME RESPONSES Used range of ratings, strong views	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	CENTRAL TENDENCY Mid range responses, cautious approach to testing, mild views, possibly less self awareness
DISAGREEMENT Tendency to use "disagree" response	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	ACQUIESCENCE Tendency to use "agree" response

Reference Group: Composite group - customer contact people, call centre, sales representatives, consultants

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NORM UPDATE

Sales Preference Indicator Sales and Customer Contact Applicants

Author: OPRA

Created: 2/10/2001

Dim	Sample Size	Mean	SD
AS	637	39.10	4.60
EO	637	31.90	6.50
SP	637	33.20	5.00
IN	637	36.90	6.80
OF	637	44.90	3.50
COMP	637	30.10	4.60
SD	637	30.50	6.10
OR	637	216.00	18.50
CT	637	60.60	18.10
AQ	637	145.70	12.40

Notes

437 Applicants for positions such as Sales Reps, Customer Contact Staff, Call Centre Sales Staff, Professional Services Consultants, Executives with Business Development responsibilities, Plus approx 200 existing job holders in above categories.