

Sales Effectiveness Profile

Dr. Jon Warner

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Introduction and Instructions

In an increasingly competitive world, an effective salesperson (no matter what they might be trying to sell) needs a wide variety of skills and competencies in order to be successful. These skills include the ability to **appreciate customer needs and expectations, listen attentively, be analytical, problem solve, handle objections and even complaints, communicate and present effectively, show personal warmth and empathy, demonstrate tenacity and self motivation be well organized and resourceful**, and many other attributes. Not only is this list of competencies a long one, but the skills needed are likely to vary in the four major phases of the sales cycle—these are when a salesperson is **prospecting, negotiating the sale, closing, or providing follow-up service**.

Extensive research has been conducted over a large population of over 400 sales managers and sales representatives (in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia). This was also carried out across a wide range of product- and service-led industries. This research clearly demonstrated that a number of core competencies were critical in every phase of the sales process. In total, seven competencies were identified, and these are as follows:

- **Temperament/disposition**
- **Organizational skills**
- **Active-listening skills**
- **Communication skills**
- **Relationship-nurturing ability**
- **Exceeding customer expectations skills**
- **Drive and persistence skills**

This questionnaire is a self-scoring sales effectiveness assessment instrument based on these competencies to help individuals understand more about their relative skills in this critical area. The seven competencies that contribute to good (or bad) sales skills or competencies mentioned above have therefore been drawn out extensively to gauge an individual's overall selling profile.

Ideally, each of these competencies should be viewed as individual pieces in an overall "Sales Effectiveness jigsaw." Although no one piece makes for effective sales competence by itself, each piece does work in combination with the others to create a comprehensive model. By aspiring to improve our performance in all of these core competency areas, it is consequently suggested that we can improve our capacity to sell effectively in many different situations and at all four of the major selling phases.

Each of the above seven competencies is explained briefly in the summary paragraph under each respective heading in this questionnaire booklet.

Completing this Booklet

Completing this booklet is simple. At the top of each page, read the introductory paragraph to help you understand the competency, and then shade in all the boxes to the score you select from 1 to 5. Always select a full score (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5), not a half score. For example, if you score the statement “Is happy to make small talk with people,” as a 2 (meaning “occasionally”), shade in only the first two boxes on the left. If you score it as a 5 (meaning “almost always”), shade in all five boxes from the left. By continuing to do this, you will build up a bar graph or “histogram,” to give you a quick visual reference of your scores.

Example: Score = 3

1	2	3	4	5

Because the scores are always 1 to 5 and always go from “almost never” or 1 on the left, to “almost always” or 5 on the right, once all 12 statements in the competency have been answered, you can quickly see your scores in an overall pictorial sense. As “1” is generally ineffective sales competence and “5” is generally effective sales competence, the shorter the bars the more your profile suggests that you might do more to become a more effective sales person.

As a final step, add up all your scores within each competency and divide them by 12 (the total number of statements) and shade in the Aggregate Score box in the same way (this time you will get an exact score like 3.7, so you can estimate this point and shade in part of a box).

Having shaded the question boxes, you can now look at the competency interpretation notes at the bottom of the same page. These notes will also show you the likely impact of certain scores and possible actions for the low scorers. Continue to do this for all seven competencies (one competency on each page).

After you have completed and read the interpretation notes for all seven competencies, on page 10, you can plot your competency scores on the “spider” diagram shown. Once you have connected all of these points, you will create an overall sales effectiveness profile. In addition, by adding up all the aggregate scores from all the competencies and dividing by seven, you can calculate and enter your total Sales Effectiveness Profile score in the box provided.

Pages 11 and 12 also provides some further general notes on action that can be taken for your lower scoring competencies.

Finally, a personal sales effectiveness action plan template is provided for individuals to develop a written plan to address some of the items and issues identified. Individuals might like to copy this page and give it to a friend, work colleague, or family member and ask them to check (after three months or so) whether they have implemented/are implementing their improvement plan.

This booklet is yours to complete and keep as a reference document. Remember, your overall profile is likely to change over time. What you fill in about yourself today may not apply in three, six, or twelve months’ time. However, if you are honest with yourself, this profile will serve as an accurate picture of your overall ability to build customer relationships and sell more effectively, and help you identify where you should concentrate your efforts to improve your ability to lead more effectively. You can fill out another assessment in the future to see how far you have progressed.

Temperament/Disposition

Temperament/Disposition looks at your internal want or desire to find value and enjoyment through your relationships with other people in general and also looks at how “comfortable” you are at being in a sales situation. It asks the question: “How well do you operate on an open, ‘information sharing’ basis with old and new sales contacts around you?”

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never	1	2	3	4	5	Almost Always
1. Introduces themselves confidently when meeting a new person.							
2. Engages in as much small talk as necessary to help people feel comfortable.							
3. Actively finds out something about new people to whom they plan to talk.							
4. Is good at “reading” other people.							
5. Is at ease in groups of people.							
6. Notices how others are feeling.							
7. Is good at empathizing with people.							
8. Actively demonstrates that harmony and friendship are important to them.							
9. Builds trust through being reliable and sincere.							
10. Is happy to make small talk with people.							
11. Cares about people.							
12. Ensures that their deeds match their words.							
(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12)							

AGGREGATE SCORE

HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives (“very frequently” and “almost always”) are likely to mean that you are an easy going and flexibly minded individual who likes to work with and through people on a regular basis. You are likely to be happy to offer support and help as well as to point out the advantages and benefits of particular solutions over others to your existing clients and prospective customers.

A high score person will be likely to go out of their way to build relationships with a wide range of people, offering support to them and creating the opportunity for greater influence and therefore success in any selling situation. Many relationships will therefore be deep and long-lasting friendships.

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos (“almost never” and “occasionally”) are likely to mean that you might operate as a loner much of the time, doing much more by yourself

than with and through other people. You are also likely to be selective about whom you talk to, and usually only when you have a reason to initiate contact at all.

A low score person will be likely to lack general confidence about meeting new people and therefore only initiate contact when they feel the effort is likely to be tangibly worthwhile. They also tend to see most of their relationships with people as being “transactional,” operating only to make an exchange of some kind (on a like-for-like basis) rather than to offer benefits and solutions and help whenever needed.

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

Low scorers need to find ways to become more at ease in talking to people in general and in being open to talking to people without any particular purpose and engaging in small talk more often. Although it is not easy to quickly change, low scorers can also try to put themselves more often in the shoes of others and look to increase their overall empathy with people they meet.

Organizational Skills

Organizational Skills looks at how well you use organizational and prioritization systems to efficiently and successfully sell to your sales contacts or prospects. It asks the question: “How effectively do you organize yourself and the information you gather about people to whom you intend to sell in order to maximize your chances of success?”

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never			Almost Always	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Operates a formal daily or weekly system to call or follow up with people.					
2. Maintains a manual or computerized database of all sales contacts.					
3. Makes a list of things to do each day.					
4. Can quickly find the name, address, and phone number of all contacts and prospects.					
5. Checks off their daily sales contact list as it is completed.					
6. Schedules time to read about upcoming events or opportunities in which to sell.					
7. Follows through on any promises and commitments made.					
8. Systematically orders and files business cards that are offered.					
9. Paces themselves to ensure they meet sales targets or deadlines.					
10. Quickly follows up on committed actions with notes, letters, e-mail, etc.					
11. Has a good follow-up system when interesting new contacts or prospects are found.					
12. Is highly organized.					
(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12) AGGREGATE SCORE					

HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives (“very frequently” and “almost always”) are likely to mean that you are serious about your sales networking and prospecting efforts and have set up a well-prepared and comprehensive system to keep track of your meetings and interfaces. You are also likely to be able to quickly find information that you have researched or gathered in order to present well or follow up effectively.

A high score person will be likely to set up a well-structured filing and data-collection system before they initiate any serious sales effort, as well as to think about how they will organize, collate, and categorize information. In addition, they will understand the importance of following up with people they meet and keeping any promises or commitments they make.

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos (“almost never” and “occasionally”) are likely to mean that you might not worry about setting up much in the way of systems before you engage in the selling process or gather relevant information that you might

need to be successful. As a result, you might readily lose cards, paper, phone numbers, etc., and have to expend more time than necessary in finding what you need (and sometimes the same information again and again).

A low score person will be likely to approach the whole selling process in a disorderly fashion and therefore find themselves repeating their efforts to find people or follow up with them. Low scorers will also keep “loose” files or no organization system at all to refer to information that they have collected when they need it.

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

Low scorers need to establish a contact management system (either manual or computerized) and force themselves to log information from sales-oriented meetings and conversations as soon as they occur. In addition, they should transfer key data from discussions with prospects and customers as well as from leaflets, brochures, or business cards into their system frequently, sorting, categorizing, and labeling it so that it is easy to find when they need it.

Active-Listening Skills

Active-Listening Skills looks at how well you listen to, and successfully process your sales prospect's or customer's messages (both verbal and non-verbal) before you respond. It asks the question: "How attentive or empathetic are your listening habits in ensuring that you've fully appreciated the customer's entire communication?"

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never				Almost Always
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Avoids interrupting before the information sender has finished speaking.					
2. Ensures that they are in the right frame of mind for all important sales discussions.					
3. Often looks to paraphrase to test their interpretation of what has been said.					
4. Ensures that their body language is positively conducive to active listening.					
5. Listens enthusiastically and positively.					
6. Avoids trivializing the ideas or views expressed by other people in talking with them.					
7. Looks people in the eye and regularly nods to demonstrate that they have understood.					
8. Fully focuses their attention and concentrates on what is being said.					
9. Allows people to finish what they are saying without interruption.					
10. Is calm and patient in sales conversations and discussions.					
11. Takes in information on several different "channels" where necessary.					
12. Is an effective and patient listener.					
(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12)					
AGGREGATE SCORE					

HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") are likely to mean that you are an attentive listener and effective at appreciating the tenor of most communications in whatever form they might take. You will therefore concentrate genuinely and focus well on what customers or sales prospects say to you and maintain a calm and patient demeanor to let clients get their message across without interruption.

A high score person will be likely to be seen as a highly appreciative and attentive listener and one that freely gives of their time and energy to ensure that they have done as much as possible to hear and appreciate the sender's full message. High scorers will therefore tend to be much more valued when a customer or prospective client is looking to communicate important or complex information and gain their insight or comment.

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") are likely to mean that you might not

always fully appreciate what prospects or customers communicate or that you miss important components of the overall message. You are also prone to being easily distracted and to jump into conversations before the sender has finished speaking.

A low score person will be likely to find that communications can be frustrating or even confusing. Although blame might often be attributed to the sales prospect or customer, this is more likely to arise as a result of poor listening, giving insufficient time and focus to hearing the full message and letting the mind wander to other things (or supposedly greater priorities and tasks).

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

Low scorers need to speak less and listen more. To do this, they need to find conducive listening environments where necessary, avoid interrupting and not allow their mind to wander. Most of all, they need to quietly hear the whole message being communicated without "jumping" in too soon.

Communication Skills

Communication Skills looks at the extent to which you listen and feed back to your contacts in order to build the quality and depth of all your sales relationships. It asks the question: “How effectively do you give and receive from your sales contact network in order to establish efficient communication channels?”

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never				Almost Always
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Uses multiple channels to get sales messages across to people.					
2. Trusts and follows their intuition about people and relationships.					
3. Maintains good eye contact with people when communicating.					
4. Is highly conscious of the needs of any “audience” to which they communicate.					
5. Delivers their communications in a pace and a way that is comfortable for others.					
6. Calls to follow up on new sales contacts quickly.					
7. Is gracious and courteous in all dealings with people.					
8. Is a warm and open person with whom to have a conversation.					
9. Demonstrates complete integrity in all their personal interactions.					
10. Gives open and honest information when asked directly by customers.					
11. Will initiate conversations with complete strangers.					
12. Is up-to-date and well informed.					
(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12)					
AGGREGATE SCORE					

HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives (“very frequently” and “almost always”) are likely to mean that you appreciate the value of carefully listening to and “reading” the needs of your contacts. You also understand that regular and varied communication over time considerably helps build strong and successful customer relationships.

A high score person will likely enjoy being a contact or potential customer communication “hub,” or be seen as a well-connected person. They are therefore both a useful data resource as well as a good “first port of call” for sales contacts to share their ideas or the challenges they face (and therefore are often seen to have potential solutions to their customers’ problems).

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos (“almost never” and “occasionally”) are likely to mean that you might fail to either listen effectively to sales contacts you meet or to communicate with your network contacts sufficiently to build

deeper relationships with them. You are also likely to keep to yourself too much, often leaving you with missed sales opportunities.

A low score person will likely be a “disconnected information island” in a sales network. This means they don’t always build relationships with their contacts to a deep enough level and might have to work much harder by “churning and burning” many more contacts who they meet than they should have to.

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

Low scorers should spend as much time as they can collecting useful data, information, and news and carefully assessing to whom it might be useful or interesting. Such information should be offered regularly and graciously to sales contacts as a way of opening up general communication channels and in order to help build relationships (including initiating relationships with completely new people and relative strangers).

Relationship-Nurturing Ability

Relationship-Nurturing Ability looks at the extent to which you sincerely and enthusiastically invest your time and effort into building and growing your relationships with your sales contacts. It asks the question: “How well do you nurture your relationships with your contacts and prospective customers to develop high levels of warmth, empathy, and mutual trust?”

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never	1	2	3	4	5	Almost Always
1. Uses a variety of careful questioning approaches to understand a sales contact.							
2. Watches people's facial expressions and hand movements carefully in all discussions.							
3. Understands other people's non-verbal clues and signals when they are offered.							
4. Reintroduces themselves to contacts met before to avoid any embarrassment.							
5. Understands that sales contacts' feelings and emotions communicate more than words.							
6. Shows genuine interest when contacts are talking, whatever the subject or topic.							
7. Follows through on commitments.							
8. Looks to develop relationships each time contact is made.							
9. Is happy to initiate contact with quieter or more introverted people.							
10. Can be fully trusted to keep a confidence.							
11. Remembers important dates and anniversaries among their key contacts.							
12. Summarizes what is heard in a sales conversation to ensure maximum clarity.							
(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12) AGGREGATE SCORE							

HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives (“very frequently” and “almost always”) are likely to mean that you are committed to creating a warm and enabling climate in which customers feel positive and valued when they come into contact with you. This means that you almost instinctively put yourself in other people’s “shoes” to better understand their needs and aspirations.

A high score person will be likely to quickly build empathy with most people they meet or at least find out a lot of minor details about the person that they can then recall and build upon in future conversations. They will also give much of themselves to others without ever feeling that they have to balance how much is given versus how much is taken.

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos (“almost never” and “occasionally”) are likely to mean that you are less concerned with or even “blind” to the needs of specific sales

prospects and customers you meet. You might also be overly transactional in your dealings with people, thinking more about your own needs rather than those of other people.

A low score person will likely keep their sales conversations or meetings too short or is prone to focus only on what are perceived to be significant or important points of discussion (ignoring small talk or minor social exchange). They will also often forget people’s names and sometimes fail to recall details from past conversations.

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

Low scorers need to try to regularly imagine what their sales contacts might be thinking or feeling, or imagine what they might value. Having done this, they can look to provide ideas, suggestions, or general advice to be supportive. Such support should be genuinely and warmly offered with good eye contact and trying hard to remember details and personal facts from prior conversations.

Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills

Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills looks at the extent to which the individual has an “environmental radar” tuned to the economy, competitors, the market, and customers to guide their day-to-day actions. It asks the question: “How well do you listen to external sources of information and work across functions, departments, and teams to help offer sales service excellence to your customers?”

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never			Almost Always	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Understands the market and keeps up-to-date with competitor activity.					
2. Keeps abreast of new or leading-edge business thinking.					
3. Has in-depth understanding about all key stakeholder groups and their changing needs.					
4. Provides clear guidance to customers about what to expect and how best to get it.					
5. Continually improves processes to meet and exceed customer expectations.					
6. Has a clear vision of what service excellence should look like.					
7. Compares process performance and results with best-in-class external organizations.					
8. Actively seeks customer feedback, both formally and informally.					
9. Systematically collects customer comments and categorizes them for later analysis.					
10. Looks to improve processes by carefully listening to their customers.					
11. Actively seeks to exceed standards for achieving future excellence in customer service.					
12. Clearly understands where technology can play an important role in improving the sales value proposition.					

(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12) **AGGREGATE SCORE**

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HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives (“very frequently” and “almost always”) are likely to mean that you maintain an active interest in what is happening as far as your customers are concerned and in the external commercial world in general. This will include keeping up to date with what is happening in the economy, with competitor initiatives, and on the shifting needs of different types of customers.

A high score person will be likely to invest a considerable amount of time and energy in developing effective sources of information (both inside and outside their organization) and with a wide variety of individuals and groups in different functions and businesses. This is done by nurturing a strong contact network and by maintaining a healthy, inquisitive interest in the commercial world at large.

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos (“almost never” and “occasionally”) are likely to mean that you may spend little or no time tuning in to the external commercial environment or the

changing needs or demands of customers. As such, access to external business information is likely to be limited or far slower than it needs to be to keep up to date.

A low score person will likely face market surprises more frequently than they should because they do not have a well-developed network of sources for information about changes to the economy, competitors, or customer needs. Decision-making may therefore take place without a sound, up-to-date external market context or without reasonable regard to what is happening that might be relevant.

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

Low scorers need to spend more time talking about general commercial issues to internal colleagues from other functions and departments and use this experience to start nurturing useful contacts inside and outside the business. This might include similar or competitive service organizations, suppliers, and other intermediary businesses. Learn to steer these conversations toward what people think about the direction in the economy, trends in competitor activity, or any shift in consumer attitudes or expectations.

Drive and Persistence Skills

Drive and Persistence Skills looks at the extent to which your sales contact relationship building efforts remain constant and relentless through obstacles and time. It asks the question: “With how much tenacity do you develop your personal sales network and drive toward better outcomes through people?”

Please complete this part of the questionnaire as honestly as possible. It can help you improve your ability to sell more effectively. The choice scales are as follows:

1 = almost never; 2 = occasionally; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently; 5 = almost always.

Fill in all the boxes up to the score you select so you create a shaded bar.

	Almost Never				Almost Always
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Has the courage of their convictions.					
2. Sees that spending a lot of time connecting with people pays great dividends.					
3. Is passionate about what people can achieve together.					
4. Actively shows that relationship building has to be a life-long commitment.					
5. Does not easily take “no” for an answer from people.					
6. Shows that when the going gets tough, you should keep going, no matter what.					
7. Is happy to ask for a referral to someone else from every sales contact they meet.					
8. Focuses most of their time on activity that adds value for their customers.					
9. Is results oriented.					
10. Demonstrates that a healthy sales network needs constant renewal and updating.					
11. Has tenacity.					
12. Demonstrates that little substance is achieved without enthusiasm about customer relationships.					

(Add up all the column scores and divide by 12) **AGGREGATE SCORE**

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HIGH

Scores predominantly in the fours and fives (“very frequently” and “almost always”) are likely to mean that you push strongly toward your sales relationship building goals or aspirations and to try “jump over” or avoid any obstacles you encounter. You are also likely to have high levels of self-motivation or internal drive and often act as a role model for others.

A high score person will likely be naturally enthusiastic about their customer relationships and often go out of their way to find opportunities to involve people in goals or challenges (other people’s and their own). They are also likely to take their sales commitments seriously and work hard to achieve results in order to help their whole customer base become successful over the long term.

LOW

Scores predominantly in the ones and twos (“almost never” and “occasionally”) are likely to mean that you often become distracted or overly affected by obstacles and difficulties that

arise when you are trying to build your customer base. Selling and general prospecting effort is therefore likely to be conducted too much at random, or by accident, and followed through with inadequate passion or energy.

A low score person will likely have only a limited commitment to achieving better results through people, too often preferring to take on difficult tasks or projects by themselves. They therefore might lose faith in their own ability to achieve some of their sales tasks or goals and occasionally let their customers down or fail to deliver on a promise or commitment.

ACTION FOR LOW SCORERS

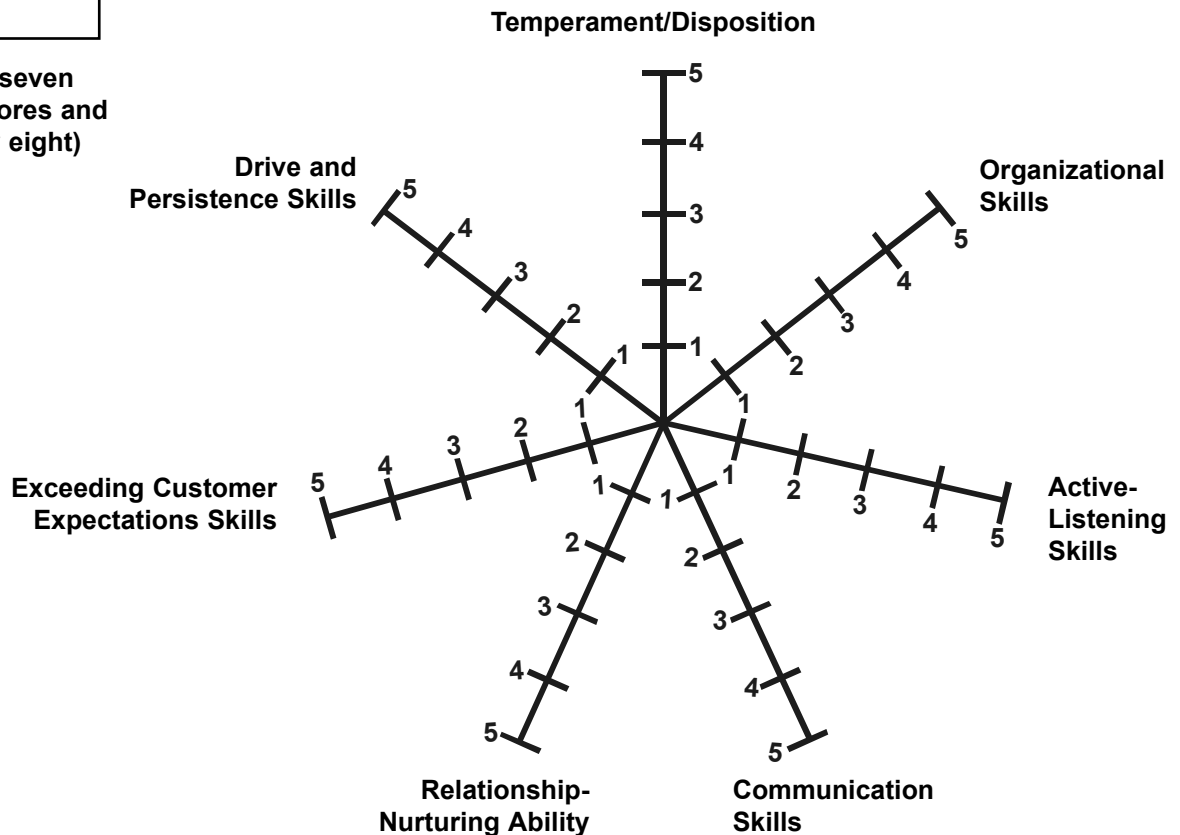
Low scorers need to think carefully about the whole sales cycle with each customer and make sure they organize as much effort and resources as are necessary in order to fully meet (and where possible exceed) their promises. This also entails becoming a personal role model for hard work, determination, and tenacity.

General Interpretation

For each of the seven competencies on the previous pages, a small histogram will be created when the blocks are shaded in, with the aggregate score at the bottom of each competency being the average of the twelve scores (total scores in the competency divided by 12). Averages of 3.75 or more in each competency are “good,” scores of 2.5 to 3.75 should “bear further thought and reflection,” and scores of 2.5 or less are “in need of attention” and might need some immediate focus. In an overall sense, while each competency is a self-contained mini-questionnaire in its own right, your average scores for all seven competencies can be plotted next to one another on the chart below.

Your Total Sales Effectiveness Score

(Add all seven average scores and divide by eight)



By plotting your average score in each competency on each corresponding axis and by connecting your marks, you create a quick diagrammatic view of your overall Sales Effectiveness Profile. The closer your scores are to the outer ring, the better. Efforts to start to improve your sales effectiveness can be concentrated where scores are lowest (generally lower than 3).

Leadership Improvement Strategies

Although there is no prescriptive strategy that can be recommended for everyone (you must develop your own personal plan) general actions to be taken in each competency are as follows:

Temperament/ Disposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a commitment to network more widely as a means to meet more people and build your levels of comfort in dealing with people you do not know well or at all.• Develop the ability to look at issues and situations you encounter from the point of view of those involved, and think about what actions you could take to be helpful or supportive.• Take the opportunity to talk to strangers or people you do not know well more frequently.• Every day set yourself a target to engage in small talk conversation with at least one person you do not know well (whether or not they are likely to be a good sales prospect).
Organizational Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase, design, or adapt a sales/contact organization system that is easy to use and easy to maintain for you and to accommodate all of your sales contact details.• Teach yourself how to use your personal organization system properly and on a constant basis. At least once a month, review all the data you have collected, and categorize and prioritize it carefully.• Develop the habit of making regular notes after all your sales visits or meetings and transferring the most relevant data to your contact management system.• Regularly review the information that you collect on your sales prospects and your customers and follow up with a letter, phone call, e-mail, etc. (and also record any responses that you get).
Active-Listening Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nod or show that you have understood in other ways at regular points in any conversation with a sales contact.• Maintain as much direct eye contact as you can and show genuine and focused interest in the communication (and avoid generally showing any distraction—physical or mental).• Try to smile at people more often and be as friendly and sincere as you can when they are talking to you.• Make a strong effort to put yourself in the other person's position and to imagine what they might be feeling or where they might be coming from in sending their message.
Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep files and folders for useful articles, ideas, news stories, clippings, and other data you read or think might be interesting or worthy of follow-up to help your sales effort.• Think about who might benefit from your product, information, or services (or might find it interesting and make contact and listen to what you have to offer). Use the excuse to talk and discover more about your contact and to deepen your relationship.• Start to think about the different prospects or customer audiences to which you have to communicate or present and develop a list of variations in style and content that you might successfully adopt in the future.• Develop a series of sales presentation "scripts" that you can deliver flawlessly and with total confidence in a range of different situations that you might encounter in the future.

Leadership Improvement Strategies

Relationship-Nurturing Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to be as positive and sincere as possible in all your conversations with your sales contacts and be sensitive to people's feelings or emotions as well as their words.• Try to develop as much trust as you can and make sure that you meet any commitments that you make to customers.• Make sure that your deeds always match your words when you make statements about what you intend to do after a discussion or meeting with a sales contact.• Aim to look at every sales conversation that you plan to have with a prospect from their perspective as much as you can before holding the meeting and plan to handle any objections that you can imagine.
Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read more widely and regularly to keep up to date about trends in the market, in best practice enterprises, and in other innovative industries and sectors.• Take a greater interest in customer feedback and even actively communicate with customers to gain input on strengths and weaknesses about what they are being offered (and how it might be improved).• Identify one key process in your work area that could be improved by technology and develop a plan to describe how this might be brought about.• Engage in some external process benchmarking to test whether a targeted performance area is at a sufficiently competitive level for customer needs.
Drive and Persistence Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Even in the face of obstacles, remain committed by sticking to your sales prospecting plans, and celebrate your successes rather than worry about your failures.• Make a careful note of commitments that you make or priorities that are important to your customers, and do everything you can to meet their expectations.• When good sales opportunities arise, think about the resources that you will need and the people that could potentially help you. Take steps to organize these at the earliest possible opportunity or gain people's commitment to assist you when you need their help.• Even when you experience a "no sale" or rejection, get used to asking your prospective customer what else you could have done or even whether they could recommend anyone else to whom you could talk in the future.

Personal Action Planning

If an individual, or even a whole team, invests the time and energy in completing any diagnostic instrument, it is critical that at least an equal amount of time is taken to reflect upon the results and to engage in some serious action planning on a personal basis. Effective action planning cannot be done in a few short minutes or without some careful consideration. After all, we are all too well aware that personal goals without commitment are no better than “brave intentions” and are likely to fail.

To help overcome this problem, the Sales Effectiveness Profile includes an action planning template and a notes pages. It asks participants to review their scores on the “spider diagram” and to then look at which competencies are shown to be the ones most in need of development. Once these competencies are identified, a range of actions that could be taken can be entered, or the suggested action plan ideas on the previous two pages can be drawn upon or adapted.

Whether the individual draws on these ideas or develops their own personal action plan, this should be recorded on the template provided (which is ideally copied and passed to a colleague who can be asked to follow up in several weeks or months to check whether they are sticking to their plan or achieving the results and targets that have been set).

Personal Action Plan

**My overall
score is**

Date of Action Plan: _____

The areas most in need of attention (in priority order) and their aggregate scores are:

	SCORE	COMPETENCY
1.	<input type="text"/>	_____
2.	<input type="text"/>	_____
3.	<input type="text"/>	_____

My specific plans for becoming more effective in Competency 1 are:

	IMMEDIATELY (✓)	By when
Step 1: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Step 2: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Step 3: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

My specific plans for becoming more effective in Competency 2 are:

	IMMEDIATELY (✓)	By when
Step 1: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Step 2: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Step 3: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

My specific plans for becoming more effective in Competency 3 are:

	IMMEDIATELY (✓)	By when
Step 1: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Step 2: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Step 3: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

In overall terms, I will stop doing or reduce my involvement in:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Action Notes

Now that you have plotted your scores and read the associated descriptions for each competency, use the space below to make a number of action notes for yourself. Ideally, you should focus on areas where the scores are high (weak areas).

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Warner is a professional manager with over 20 years' experience working with multinational companies in the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States, and Australia. He has been the senior staff member in human resources departments, and has held several professional leadership positions with responsibility for large groups of employees. Jon has in recent years been involved in wide-ranging organizational consultancy work and the pursuit of best-practices leadership for such major organizations as Mobil Oil, Qantas, United Energy, Dow Corning, Coca Cola, Barclays Bank, National Bank, Honda, BTR, Gas and Fuel, Air Products and Chemicals, and Caltex.

Jon is managing director of Team Publications PTY Limited, an international training and publishing company committed to bringing practical and fun-to-use learning material to the worldwide training market, such as the One Page Coach® storyboard-based integrated training packages. He holds a master's degree in Business Administration and a Ph.D. in organizational change and learning, and lives and works on Australia's Gold Coast.

REFERENCES

The following books would provide useful reading for any individual wishing to learn more about selling and sales in general.

1. *Spin Selling*, Neil Rackham, McGraw-Hill, 1998.
2. *Salesman's Guide to More Effective Selling: The Handbook of Selling Skills*, Homer B. Smith, MEA, 1994.
3. *Service Wisdom*, Ron Zemke and Chip Bell, Lakewood Books, 1989.
4. *The Sales Bible*, Jeffrey H. Gitomer, William Morrow and Co., 1994.
5. *Moments of Truth*, Jan Carlzon, Harper & Row, 1989 edition.
6. *The Only Thing That Matters*, Karl Albrecht, Harper Collins, 1992.
7. *Customers First*, Denis Walker, Gower Publishing, 1990.
8. *Solution Selling: Creating Buyers in Difficult Selling Markets*, Michael T. Bosworth, McGraw-Hill, 1994.