

Maximizing Results Through People

Bob Wilson & Associates, Inc.

Sales and Predictive Index®

by Bob Wilson

From a PI® perspective, what does it take to be a successful sales person? The answer to that question depends on a variety of things. For example, how competitive is the market and how much influence does the salesperson have on who gets the sale? What services / functions does the salesperson provide? Is the job one of primarily service or is it primarily business development? What kind of responsiveness is required? How much flexibility is necessary to close business? How much pressure is in the environment – either from the buyer or the seller? How much paperwork is required by the company?

The answers to each of these questions help determine what kind of salesperson will work best for you in each and every market you serve. We'll discuss each of them below and their implications for the type of salesperson that will work best for you. Then, we'll talk about how we can combine all of that information and more to narrow in on the profiles that make the most sense for you to hire for your company.

How competitive is the market and how much influence does the salesperson have on who gets the sale? This is an interesting question and one that you are well served to not only determine initially, but to revisit on a regular basis. The more your salesperson has a great impact on who gets the sale in a competitive market the more you're going to want Higher A Lower D in your salespeople's profiles. Higher A people are motivated by winning and work to see they don't lose. They will do, within their power, whatever it takes to get the business because winning that sale is something they need to do more than those people who don't have similar profiles.

One thing you've got to be aware of is that the competitive needs of markets shift. For example, one of our clients distributed supplies to a segment of the construction industry. They had a product with a huge competitive advantage and paid fat commissions to a group of Low A High D route salespeople who provided good service to a group of clients who the company considered "theirs". The salespeople did a fine job until foreign competition started to erode their market. The competitor entered with price advantages that could have been met head on, had their sales team attacked the issue aggressively at the beginning. They didn't and the company didn't realize the problem until they'd lost 25% of their market share. By

then, it was too late. The erosion turned into a rout. They had a sales team of "farmers", not hunters; the market changed and 18 months later the company had to sell that segment of their business and exit the market.

It's not necessary to have competitive salespeople if your product / service has a huge competitive advantage. Low A High D service-oriented sales people work just fine where your clients are buying service or if the hard selling is done via marketing or advertising. However, if the tide starts to shift and you begin to need a more competitive sales team, you've got to re-think what kind of salespeople you need for your market. And, you'd better do it quickly.

What services / functions does the salesperson provide to the customer? Is the job one of primarily service or is it primarily business development? Generally speaking, the more services a salesperson provides to the customer, the higher the D that will be required. The more you're looking for business development, the higher the A that will be required.

The more your salesperson has a great impact on who gets the sale in a competitive market the more you're going to want Higher A Lower D in your salespeople's profiles.

The ultimate service-providing sales team I'd run into was a group that sold **and installed** the locking systems in hotels. This was a high C high D low A job. The ultimate business development job is the position that requires a one call close. This is a high A low D job.

Think about the beer, soda, or salty snack salesman who sells, but, also drives a truck, frequently takes inventory and delivers the product to the retail outlets. While the company wants some selling, the company is doing most of their selling via marketing or advertising. What they're asking their sales people to do is deliver service – a high D lower A and sometimes high C function.

Another client sells and provides service for tooling in their client companies. Their salespeople follow a route where 50% of their week is pre-determined – stopping in to pick up tools that need service as well as selling new tools. What are the key ingredients for success in their sales



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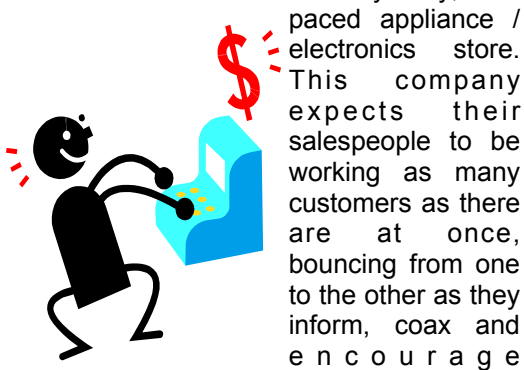
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profiles? Highest D, lower A, and low C (they frequently have to “drop everything” to take care of a customer problem).

But, if a company is working with primarily service-oriented salespeople, how do they develop new business or negotiate difficult problems (tasks typically better done by higher A people)? One solution is to pair higher A lower D people who do the business development / contract signing aspects of the jobs with higher D lower A people who do the execution aspects of the jobs. Seeing how this kind of personality based job sharing can work in your business is one of the diagnostic benefits of Predictive Index® and one you are well served to discuss with your consultant should you have questions.

What kind of responsiveness is required? The more your salespeople are asked to “turn on a dime” or “drop everything” to satisfy a customer, the more the job is likely to be done best by a low C. The more the job is route sales or sales that involve step-by-step processes, the more the job is a High C job. If every day is new, different, and chaotic for your salespeople, expect that the better ones will be lower C’s. When the salespeople have few surprises and work with one customer through close, the more likely it is a high C job.

A good example of the difference can be seen in two kinds of retail sales environments. One is a very busy, fast-



paced appliance / electronics store. This company expects their salespeople to be working as many customers as there are at once, bouncing from one to the other as they inform, coax and encourage

purchase. Each customer is touched, as it makes sense and without undue pressure until the customer is sent with a ticket to the cashier. This is a low C job. The Salon area of a high-end fashion retailer is selling apparel at \$1000+ per unit where putting together

an ensemble may be a \$10,000 purchase – or more. They want their salespeople to provide one-on-one attention from greeting until the package is wrapped and the customer walks out the door. Their customers get personal attention and ideally have personal relationships with their salespeople. If another customer enters the department during the sale, the salesperson greets them with a smile, but is encouraged by management to continue with their first customer until the sale is complete or the interaction is over. This is more of a high C job.

How much flexibility is required to close the business? The more flexibility that is required in the salesperson, especially regarding finding out-of-the-box solutions, the more likely a lower C and D will be successful. Flexibility, rolling with the punches, thinking of options, going against the grain are traits of people with lower C’s and D’s. The higher the C and D of the salespeople, the more likely they’ll want to follow established processes or rules – the more likely they’ll be successful following and confirming to guidelines and procedures.

How much does the sale involve technical problem solving? How intangible is the sale – that is, how much is the salesperson using emotion or feelings to influence the purchase? These two ends of the sales spectrum (and all the points in between) are indicative of where the A and B should lie in the successful salesperson’s profile.

The more technical problem solving, the more the sale includes an “engineered” solution; the more likely a higher A and lower B person will be successful. One client who sells products and services to trucking company fleets finds that High A Low B salespeople work best. Their approach is a no-nonsense, facts-based, results-oriented presentation. The buyers they’re working with don’t want to be taken to ball games or dinner. They want solutions for their fleets and salespeople who can deliver them. The B isn’t a part of the package that’s required or delivered – Low B works just fine.

Selling residential real estate is on the opposite end of the spectrum. In this case, the sales person is selling an emotional hook. “Imagine that you’re sitting on the sun deck of this house sharing a glass of wine”, she says to the couple, as the smell of fresh baked cookies wafts through the home and out to the porch. In this case, the salesperson isn’t trying to discuss the mechanics or construction of the house – she doesn’t know and generally doesn’t care. They’re trying to sell the couple how it would “feel” to be the proud owners of the home. Advertising and life insurance sales are other examples of “intangible” sales where higher B and lower A is strongly correlated with success.

How much pressure is there in the environment – either from the buyer or the seller? Pressure is something that exists in varying degrees in all jobs. A convenience store clerk or a bank teller in slower stores (both sales jobs in some ways) both would have very little pressure in their jobs. The sales team in the Mamet play, “Glengarry Glen Ross”, who were offered the sales prizes of new car keys, steak knives, or getting fired; was put under tremendous pressure. The more pressure a sales job has attached to it, the lower the C that’s required. The less pressure, the higher the C.

One company we worked with had a business-to-business telephone sales operation that moved from sales team to sales team as the prospect got closer to purchasing. The first team qualified the customer through a variety of questions. The second team worked to develop interest and find reasons for the client to buy. The last stop in the sales process was the closer team, whose job was to pressure the prospect to buy – get it done before they hung up! Step one was a high C job, Step two had average to lower C and the final step was a lowest C position.

Pressure can come from the buyer too. As mentioned previously, the more your clients demand your salespeople “drop

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Upcoming Open Training Sessions

Predictive Index® Training (3 days)

Location	Carmel, IN	Dates	August 2-4, 2005
	Conducted by Heather Haas		
Location	Carmel, IN	Dates	September 13-15, 2005
	Conducted by Heather Haas		

Fees: The cost for this open session is \$1,785 per attending person. If you have 5 or more attendees, we will be happy to schedule a private session for your organization.

If you have someone you would like to sign up for one of these sessions, please call or email your consultant or Penny Pruett (at 317-574-1550 or ppruett@bobwilsonconsulting.com).

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everything” to attend to their needs, the more the job is likely to require low C.

How much paperwork is required by the company? Frequently companies lose track of how much paperwork they ask their salespeople to do and how that impacts who will be successful in their jobs. It is not uncommon for salespeople to complain that they must spend >33% of their time writing reports about their efforts. This kind of job requirement demands that High D’s are the people doing the jobs. The problem is that the company not only wants them to do their paperwork – they want their salespeople to develop business. And higher D salespeople are not effective business development people. So, as

you look at the sales jobs within your company, consider what is more important – business development or paperwork production? If you want business development, think about where you can get rid of the paperwork or get admin people to do it.

These questions and their answers give us some sense about what kind of sales people will work best in an organization. But, after answering them, that’s not enough. The next step you’ll want to do is go through the PRO form. This will give you a picture of what the perfect salesperson for your specific organization and market should look like. Then you’ll want to compare your best salespeople with those who don’t perform nearly as well. This will help fill

in the range of what will work beyond perfect – frequently, that range can be pretty broad, based on which of the issues raised above are the most important.

In 20 years of working with Predictive Index®, I have seen virtually every profile be the “perfect” profile required in “sales” for a specific organization, a specific market, and a specific product. Understanding what “sales” is for you and putting that into the context of Predictive Index® is what will make you have a sales force that delivers the results you want from your sales organization.

BWA Welcomes 3 New Members to their Search Team

As more and more clients have enlisted our help with Administrative Search, we have had the pleasure of hiring some terrific individuals to meet the demand. Many of you have already had phone or email interaction with these three, so you can attest to the talent and professionalism they bring to BWA. Gina Bindley and I are so pleased to work along side them to provide the best Administrative Search service we can to our clients.

Beth Clafin is an Indianapolis native and graduate of Hanover College, where she majored in literature and communications. She previously worked as a senior public relations account executive at Hutchins/Young & Rubicam in Rochester, N.Y., working primarily for Xerox Corp. Before that, she was a reporter for several years at the Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette newspaper. She is the mother of three children and is re-joining the workforce after a break.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, **Tracy Raeder** is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies. Her focus was Japan and international politics. Tracy has experience working for Members of Congress in Washington D.C. both as a Page and an Intern. Prior to joining BWA, she worked in Huntsville, Alabama for a well-established Japanese trading company.

Cindy Elliott, a born and bred Buckeye, attended Miami of Ohio and graduated with a B.S. in Accounting. Immediately jumping the state line, she became a Hoosier and entered the world of public accounting and spent just enough time and effort in the field to become certified as a Public Accountant. Happily married for the past twenty-five years, most of Cindy’s efforts have been directed toward raising their four children and supporting their family-owned businesses.



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If addressee is no longer with your organization, please **DO NOT THROW AWAY**. Please contact Penny Pruett at (317) 574-1550 or ppruett@bobwilsonconsulting.com, or stamp "Return to Sender" and send back. Thank you.

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What's Your Time Worth?

It's become overwhelmingly clear to me in the last 6 months that for many managers and HR professionals, there are simply not enough hours in the day to devote the quality time and attention to hiring and selection that it requires. This is a dicey problem, especially when you weigh the costs of a hiring blunder or the opportunity costs of not being able to focus on your "real" job while you take time out to screen candidates for your open positions.



Likely, your time is worth more than the hourly rate we charge, which is what it costs to use us for Administrative Search. Just as likely, is the fact that the BWA Search Team has more time and expertise to devote to your search than you do. The following represents just some of the positions we've recently worked with clients to fill: Controller, HR Generalist, Account Manager, Sales Executive, Design Consultant, Maintenance and Production Supervisor, and Staff

Accountant.

Contact Heather Haas at (317) 574-1550 hhaas@bobwilsonconsulting.com to discuss how you can partner with our staff to offload the prescreening of candidates for your open positions. Can you afford not to?

Heather B. Haas

QUOTE

"Choosing the right people is what creates that elusive, sustainable, competitive advantage."

— "Execution" by Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan