

SALES EFFECTIVENESS

FEEDBACK REPORT

Sample Report
8/5/2010



INTRODUCTION

This Sales Effectiveness Feedback Report consists of six components, which are described below.

1. Overall Summary

The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in the seven competencies that make up the Sales Effectiveness profile. The areas to concentrate on are those scores above 3.5 (strong) and below 2.75 (need further development). Please note that these competency scores are averages; individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the individual competency link.

2. Category Descriptions

There are three sections for each of the seven competencies. The first of these three sections explains the competency, lists average scores, and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second section provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third section provides broadly-based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies.

3. 10/10 Report

The "10/10" Report page provides the raw scores for the 10 highest scoring questions and the 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 84. It also identifies which competency each question is from.

4. Course and Reading Suggestions

Development suggestions for the two lowest scoring competencies, including specific recommendations regarding training courses and books that will provide useful information on the topic are included.

5. Development Plan

The development plan lists questions with the five lowest scores from the assessment and puts them into a one-page template. Individuals can use this template to record the specific actions they plan to take over the next twelve months based on the general guidance offered in their feedback report and the coaching tips.

6. Coaching Tips

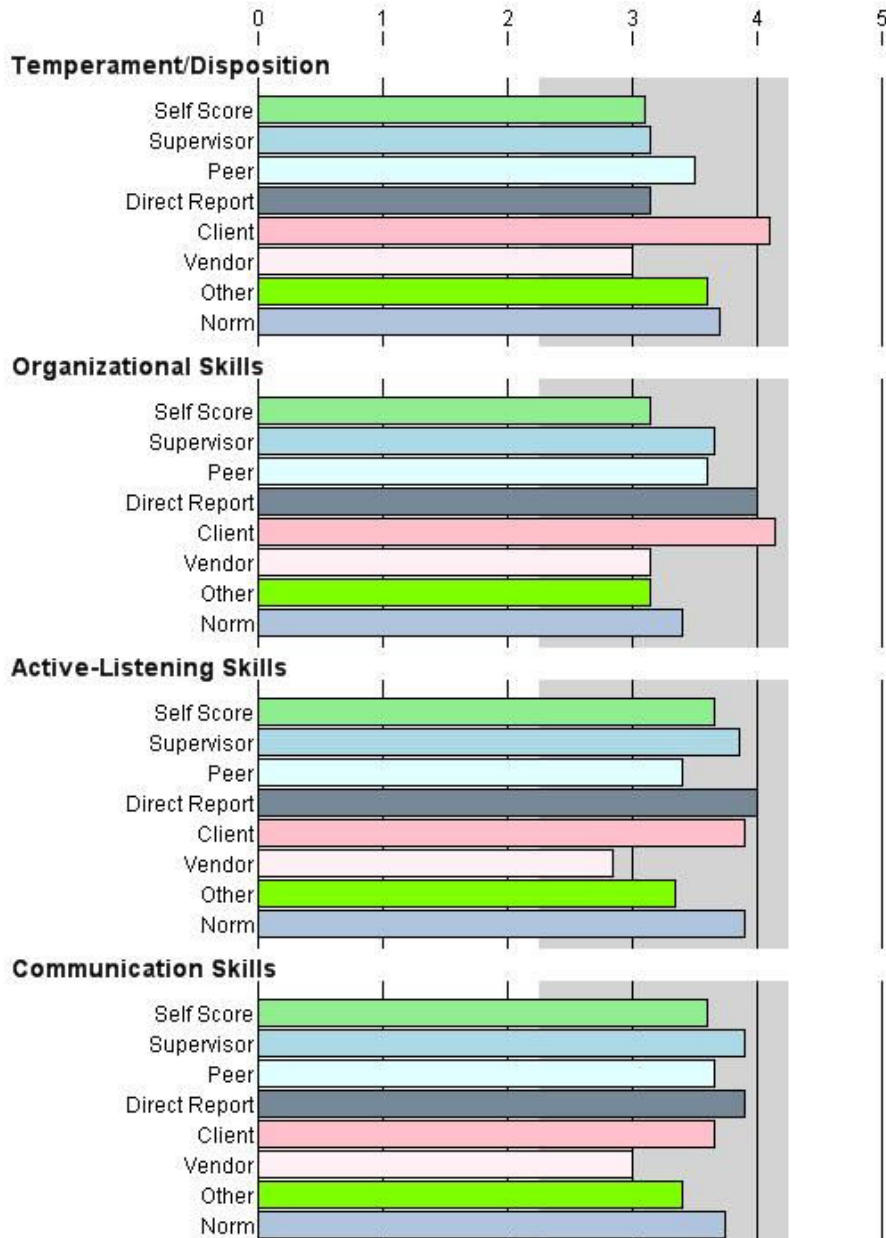
Detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions are provided in this section. They offer specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills in this competency and learn new behaviors.

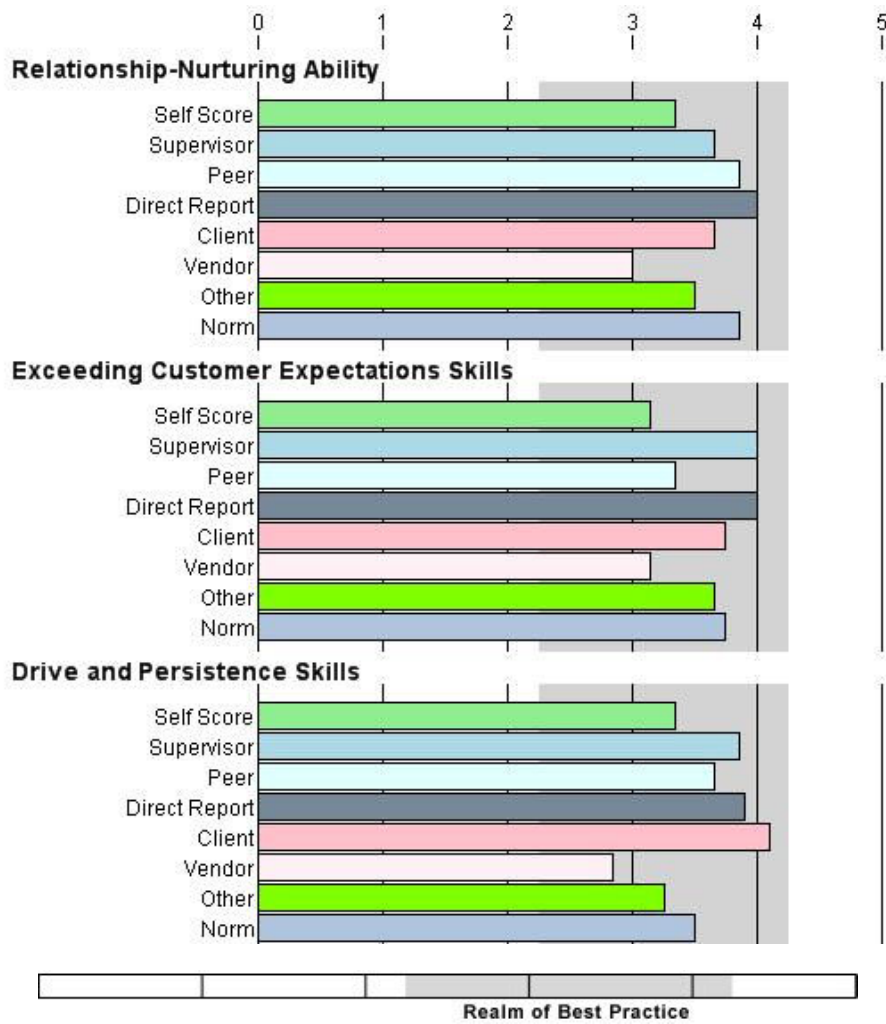
Note on 360 Degree Feedback

If you received feedback from your supervisor, direct reports or peers using this assessment, please note the following: Ratings responses from all persons who completed the assessment are averaged to produce the results in the 10/10 Report, Course and Reading Suggestions, Development Plan, and Coaching Tips.



OVERALL SUMMARY



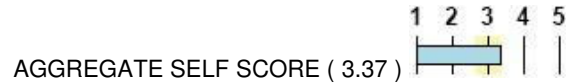


Norm bars shown on all graphs in this report are the progressive average scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.



TEMPERAMENT / DISPOSITION

Temperament/Disposition looks at your internal desire to find value and enjoyment through your relationships with other people and 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?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

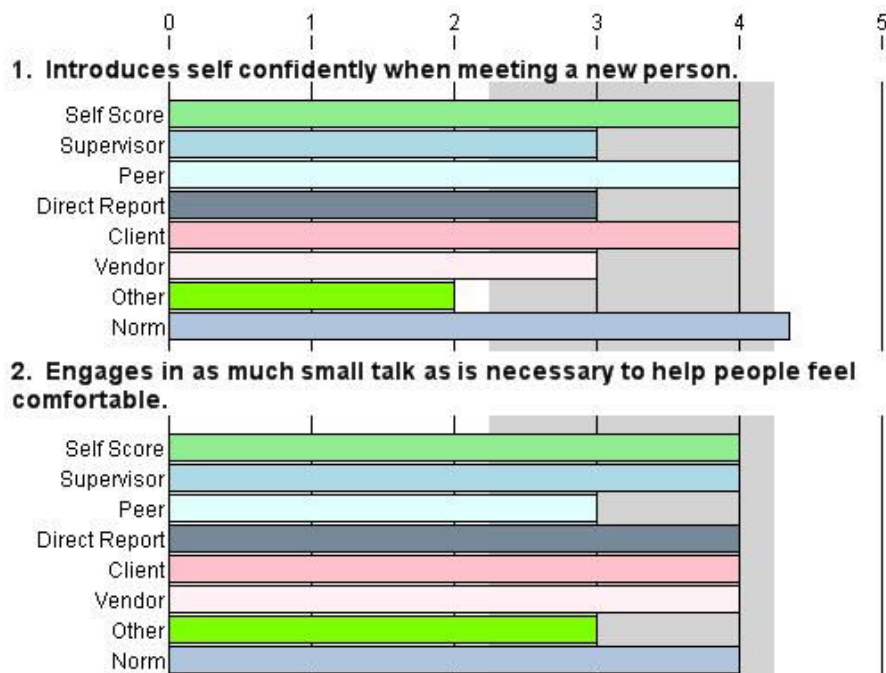
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest that you operate as a loner some or much of the time, doing much more by yourself than with and through other people. You are also likely to be selective about whom you talk to (usually only when you have a reason to initiate contact).

A low scorer is 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. Low scorers tend to consider most of their relationships with people as being "transactional," where the point is to make an exchange of some kind (on a like-for-like basis), rather than to offer benefits, solutions, and help.

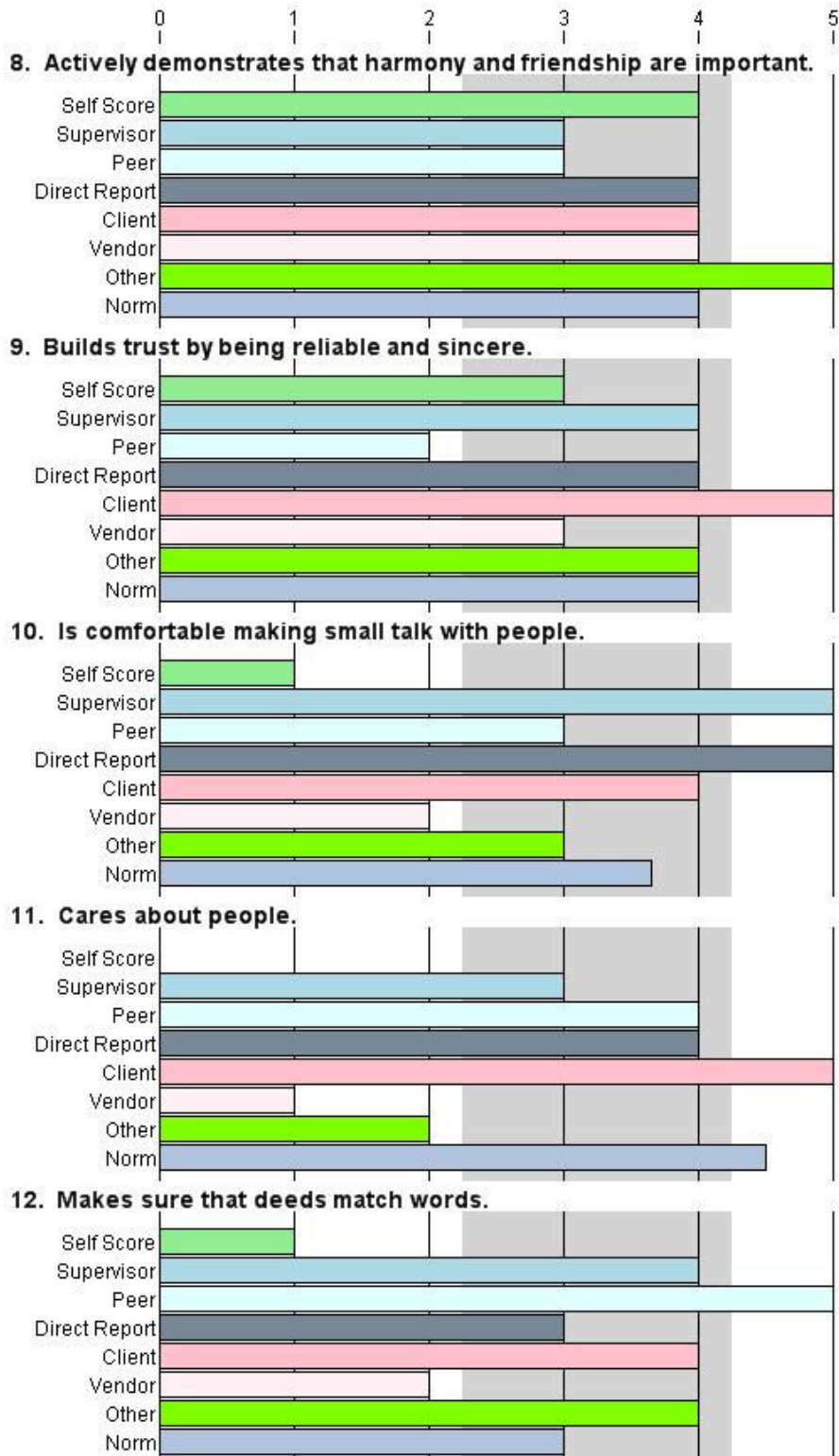
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") suggest that you are an easy-going and flexible individual who likes to work with and through people on a regular basis. You are likely to be happy to offer support and help, and are comfortable pointing out the advantages and benefits of particular solutions over others to your existing clients and prospective customers.

A high scorer is likely to go out of his or her way to build relationships with a wide range of people, offering support and creating the opportunity for greater influence and success in any selling situation. Many relationships will become deep and long-lasting friendships.







Temperament/Disposition looks at your internal want or desire to find value and enjoyment through your relationships with other people and 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?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to find ways to become more at ease in talking to people in general; initiate more spontaneous informal conversations; and engage in small talk more often. Although it is not easy to quickly change in this area, low scorers can start by putting themselves more often in the shoes of others and try to be more empathetic.

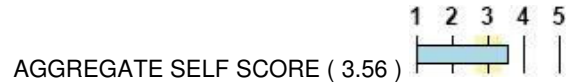
Ways to Strengthen or Improve Temperament/Disposition

- Make a commitment to network more widely as a means to meeting more people, and strengthen your level 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.
- Set yourself a daily target to engage in small talk or informal conversation with at least one person you do not know.



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?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

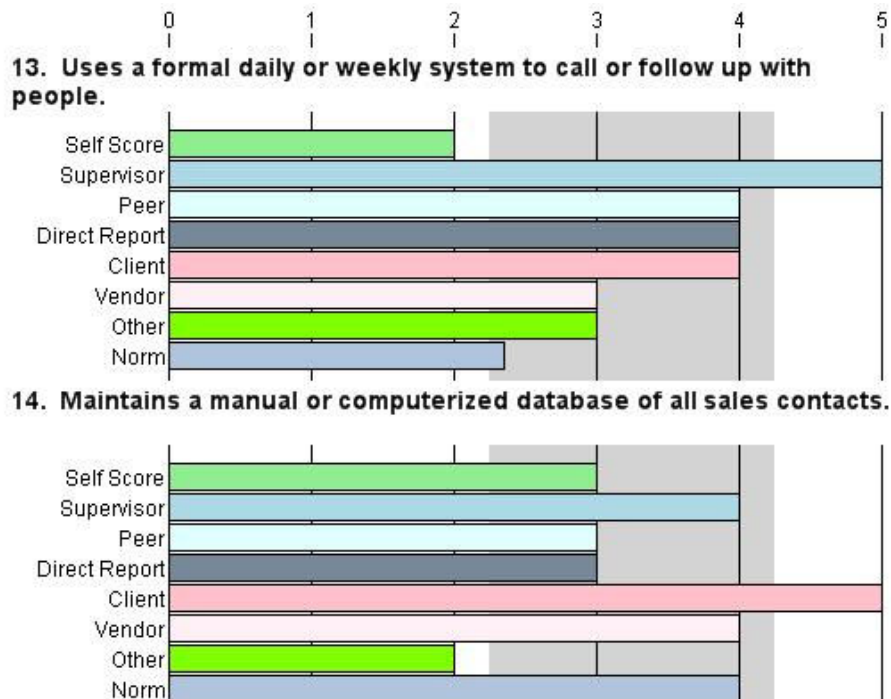
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest that you do little or no preparation and do not set up much in the way of organizational systems or gather relevant information that you might need to be successful at sales. As a result, you are more likely to lose cards, paper, phone numbers, etc., and have to expend more time than necessary in finding what you need (and sometimes have to look for the same information again and again).

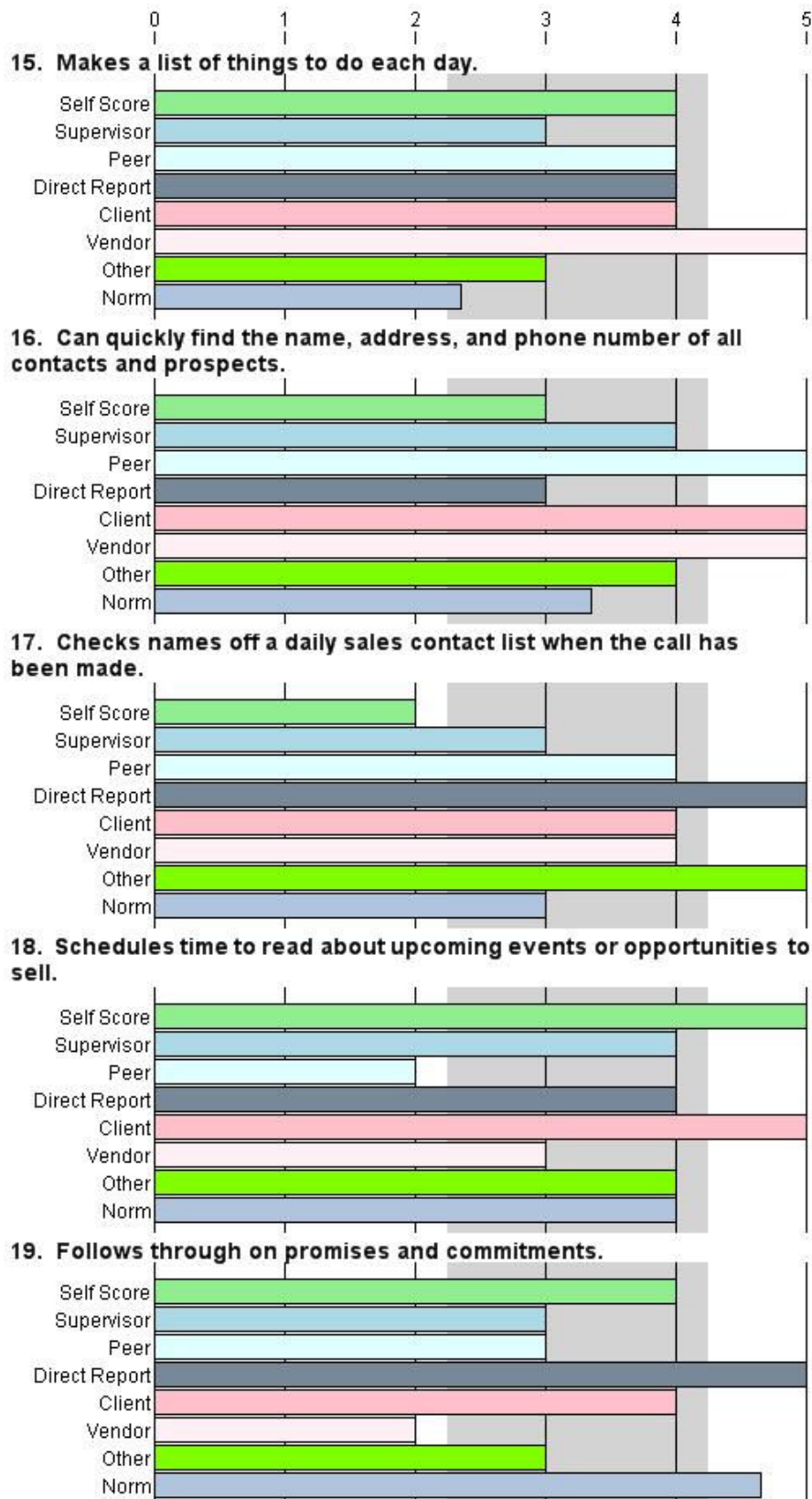
A low scorer tends to approach the whole selling process in a disorderly fashion and therefore find themselves repeating their efforts to find people or follow up with them. Low scorers are likely to keep only "loose" files or none at all, so they have no information to refer to when they need it.

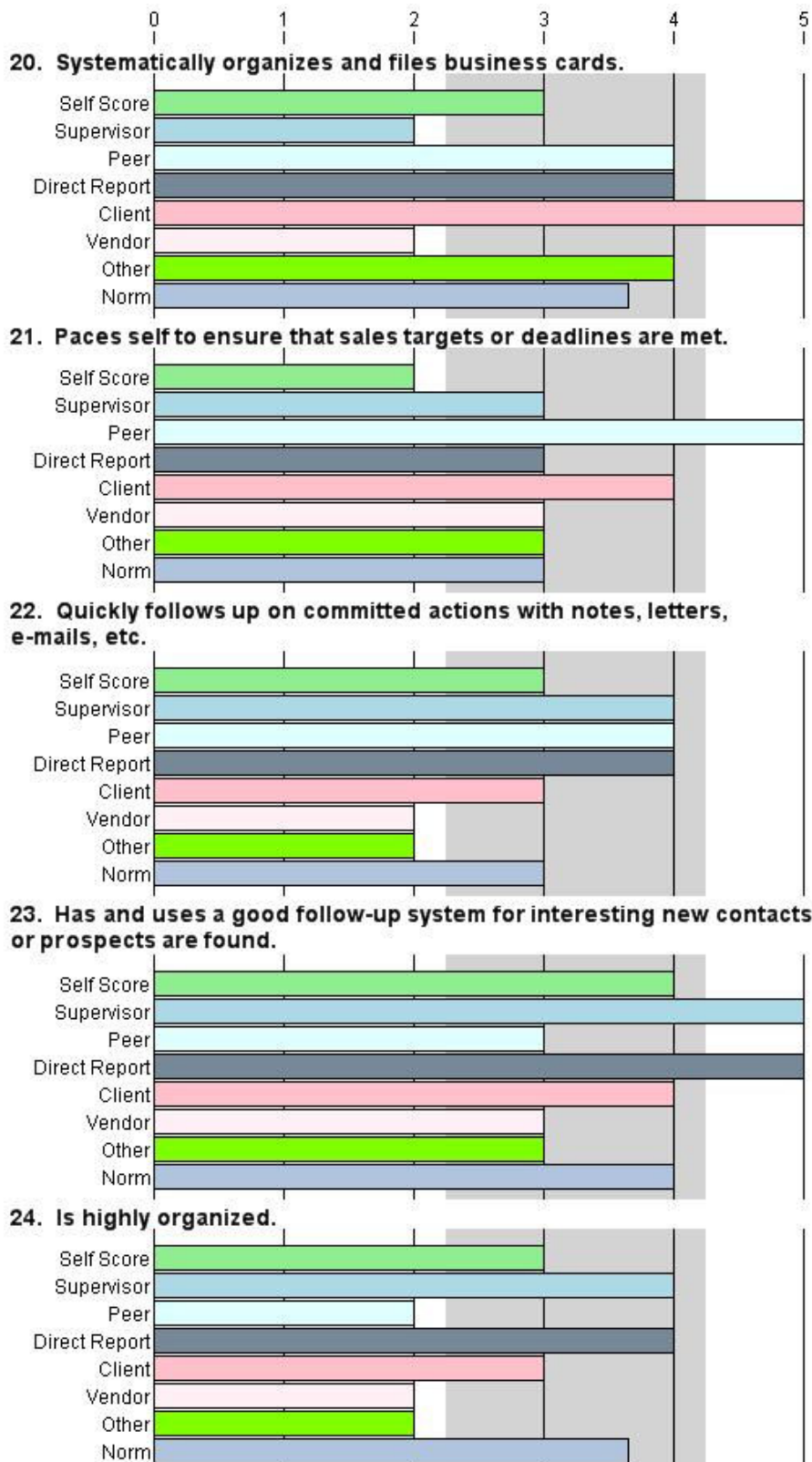
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") suggest 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 contacts. You are more likely to quickly retrieve information that you have researched or gathered in order to present well or follow up effectively.

A high scorer usually sets up a well-structured filing and data-collection system before initiating a serious sales effort, and thinks about how he or she will organize, collate, and categorize information. In addition, such people will understand the importance of following up with people and keeping any promises or commitments they make.







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?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

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 regularly transfer key data into the system including information from discussions with prospects and customers, leaflets, brochures, and business cards. They need to sort, categorize, and label the data so that it is easy to find when needed.

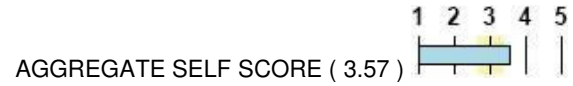
Ways to Strengthen or Improve Organizational Skills

- Purchase, design, or adapt a sales/contact management system that is easy to use and easy to maintain. Use it to store, manage, and access all of your sales contact details.
- Teach yourself how to use your personal organization system properly and daily. 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 of 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, or e-mail. Record any responses that you get.



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 you in ensuring that you've fully understood the customer's entire communication?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

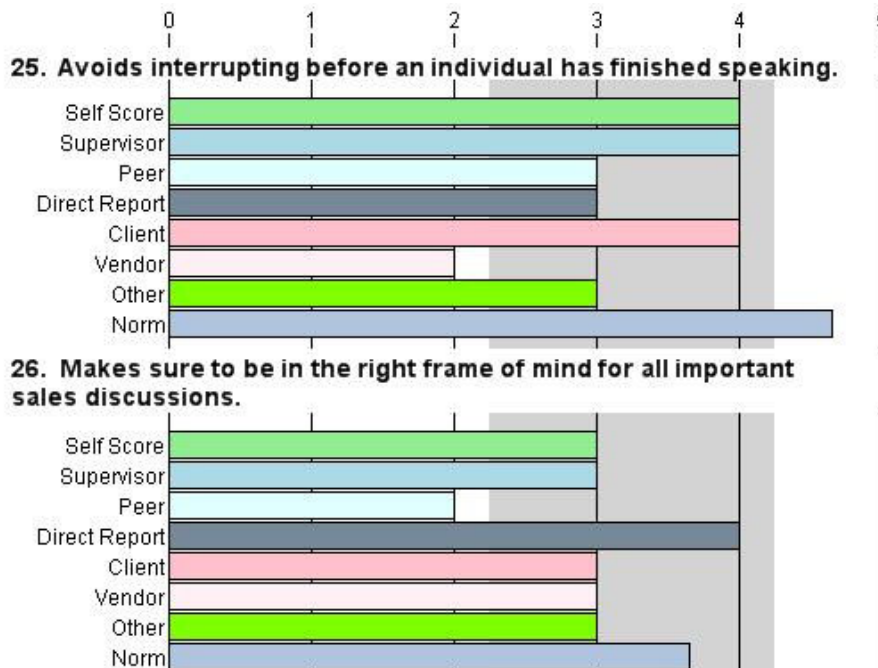
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest that you do not always fully appreciate what prospects or customers communicate, and that you miss important components of the overall message. You are also prone to being easily distracted and jump into conversations before the sender has finished speaking.

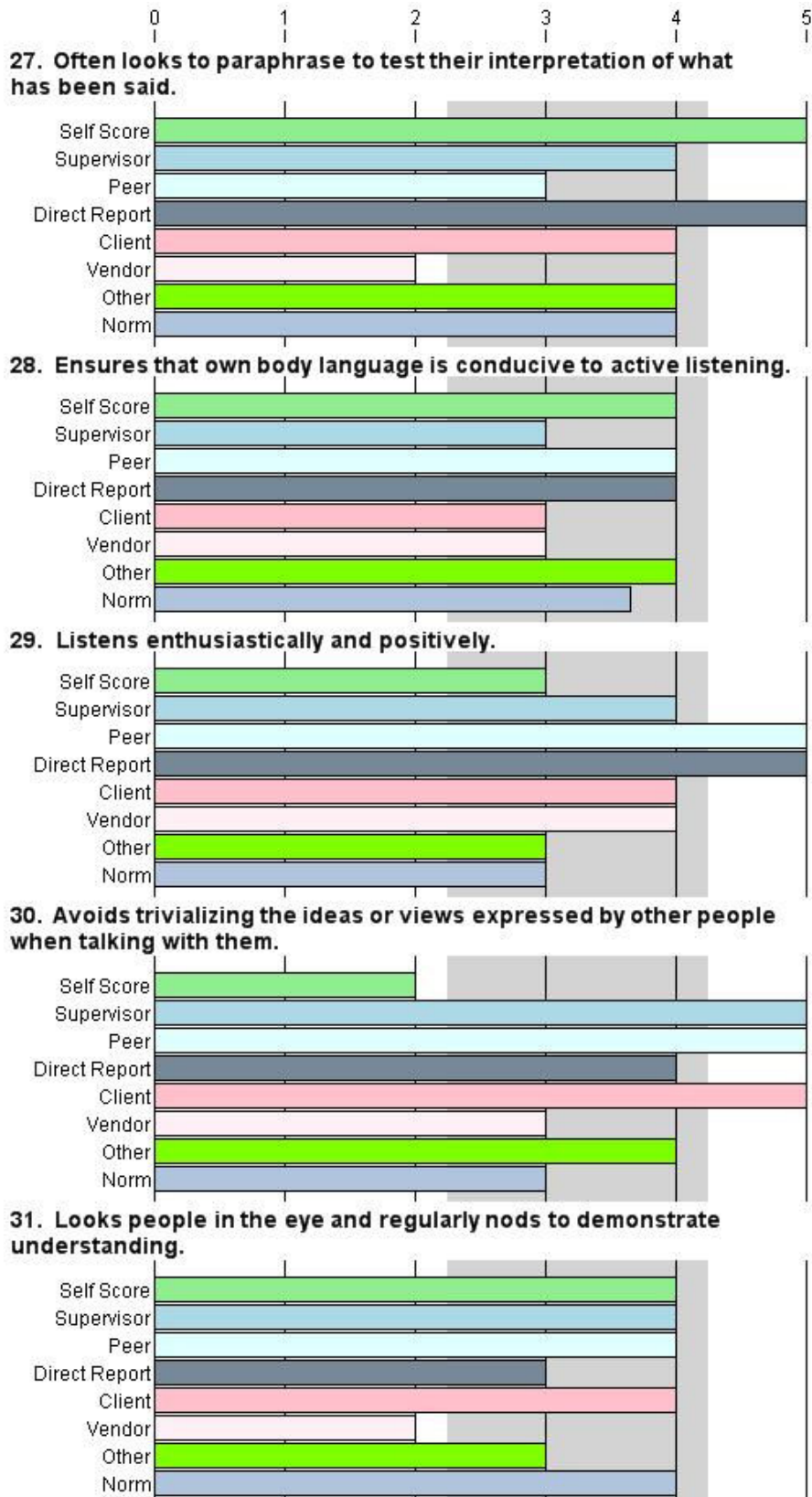
A low scorer is more likely to find communications frustrating or even confusing. Sometimes it's the fault of the sales prospect or customer, but it is more likely to arise as a result of poor listening, giving insufficient time and focus to hearing the full message, and letting the mind wander to other things (or supposedly greater priorities and tasks).

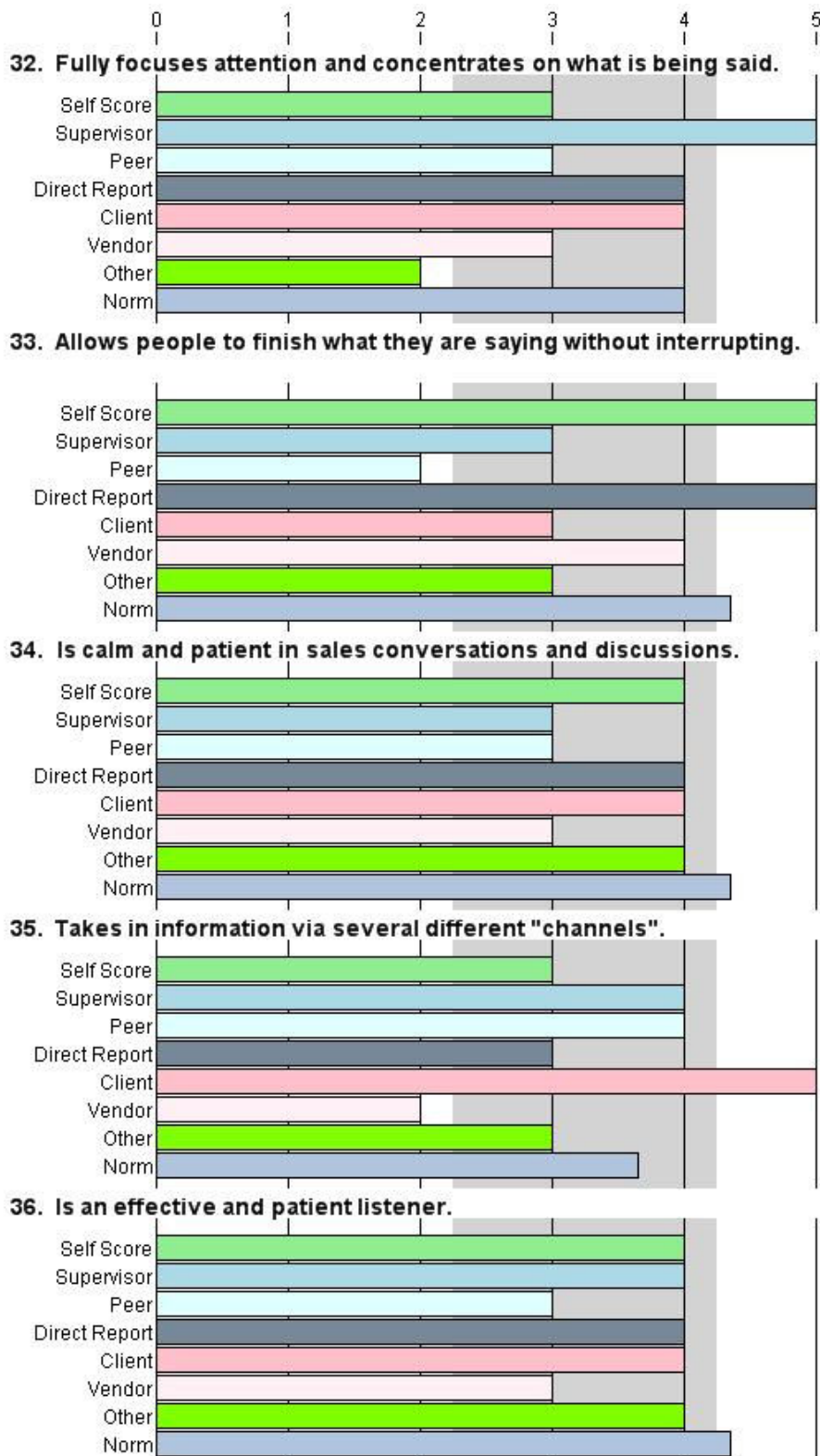
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") suggest that you are an attentive listener and effective at appreciating the tenor of most communications in whatever form they take. You 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.

High scorers tend to be highly appreciative and attentive listeners who do as much as possible to hear and appreciate the sender's full message. High scorers are the people customers and prospective clients seek out when they need feedback or insight on important or complex issues.







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

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to speak less and listen more. To do this, they need to be in an area where they are able to listen easily and focus. They must not interrupt the speaker or allow their mind to wander. Most of all, they need to listen for and hear the whole message being communicated, without "jumping" in too soon.

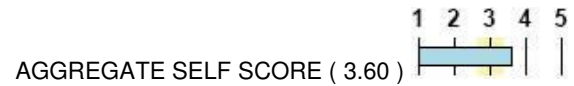
Ways to Strengthen or Improve Active Listening Skills

- At regular points in any conversation, nod or show in other ways that you have understood what a sales contact is saying.
- Maintain as much direct eye contact as you can, and show genuine and focused interest in what the speaker is saying. Avoid becoming physically or mentally distracted.
- 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 to imagine what they might be feeling or where they might be coming from.



COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communication Skills looks at the extent to which you listen, respond and provide genuine feedback to your contacts in order to strengthen all your sales relationships. It asks the question: "How effectively are you at maintaining open and honest dialogue with people in your network in order to establish efficient communication channels?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

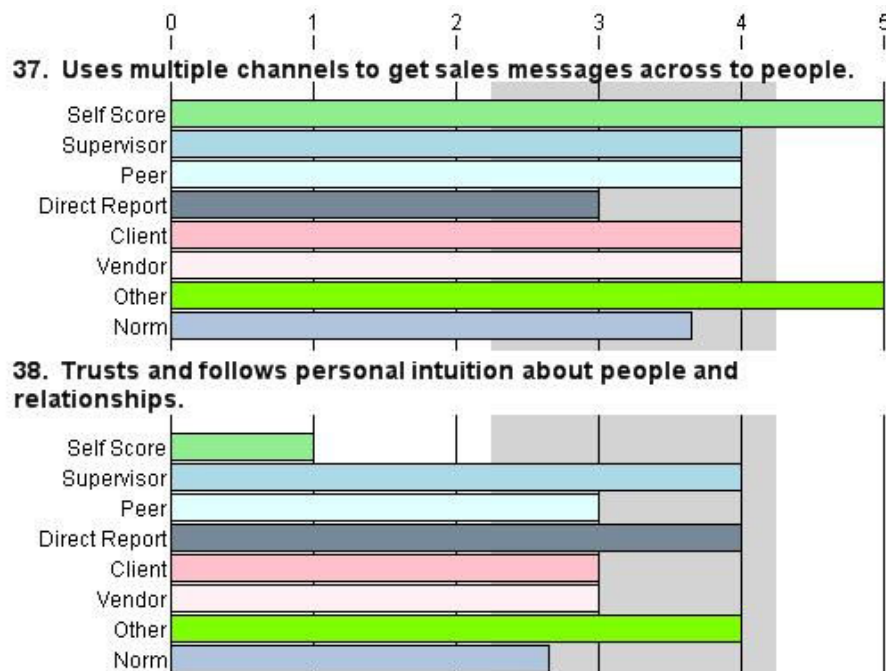
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest that you do not always listen effectively to sales contacts or communicate with your network contacts in ways that will help build deeper relationships with them. You are likely to keep to yourself too much, often leaving you with missed sales opportunities.

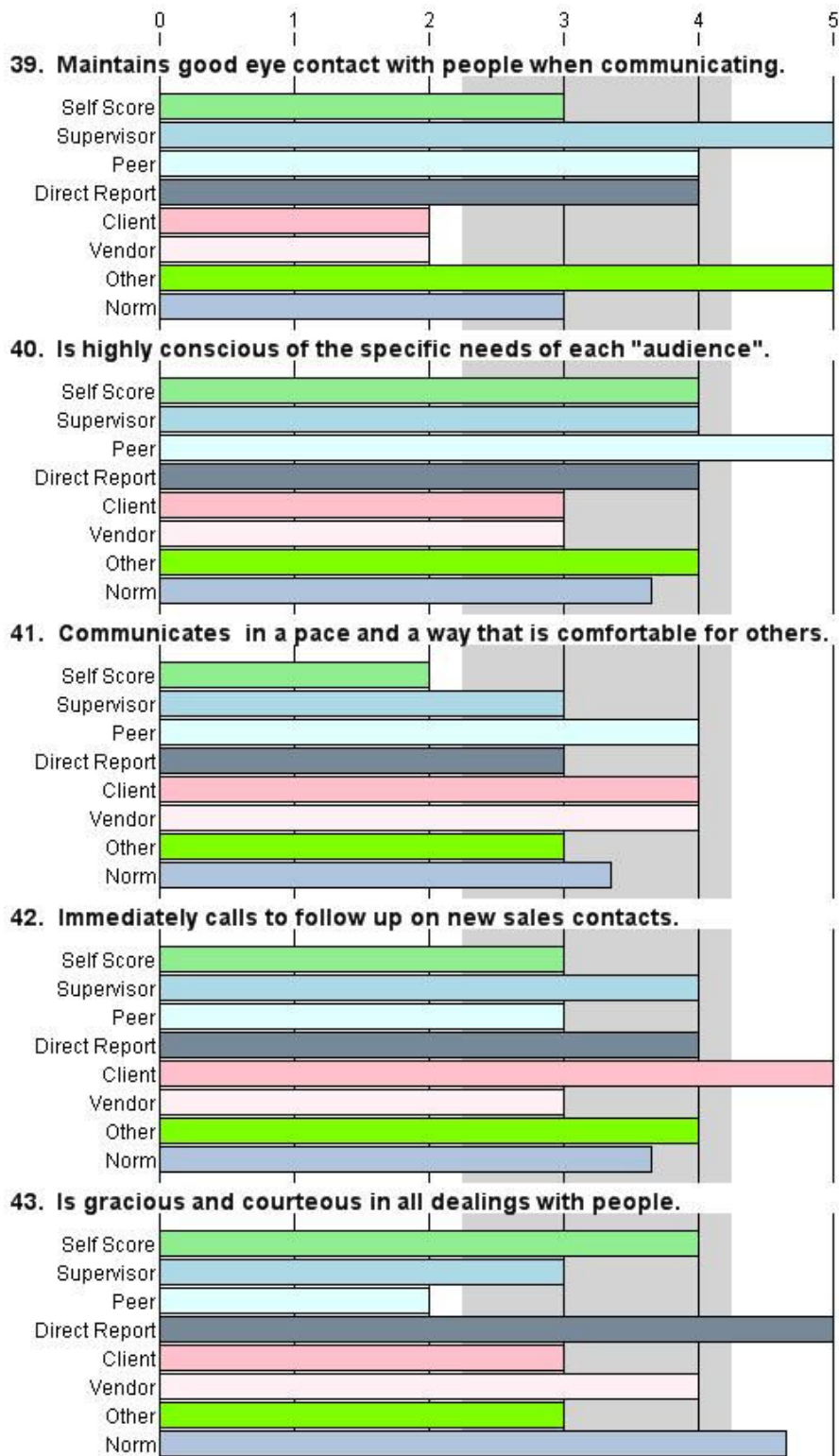
A low scorer is more likely to be a "disconnected information island" in a sales network. Such a person generally fails to nurture and deepen relationships and might have to work much harder to acquire a larger number of contacts to make up for the ones they lose.

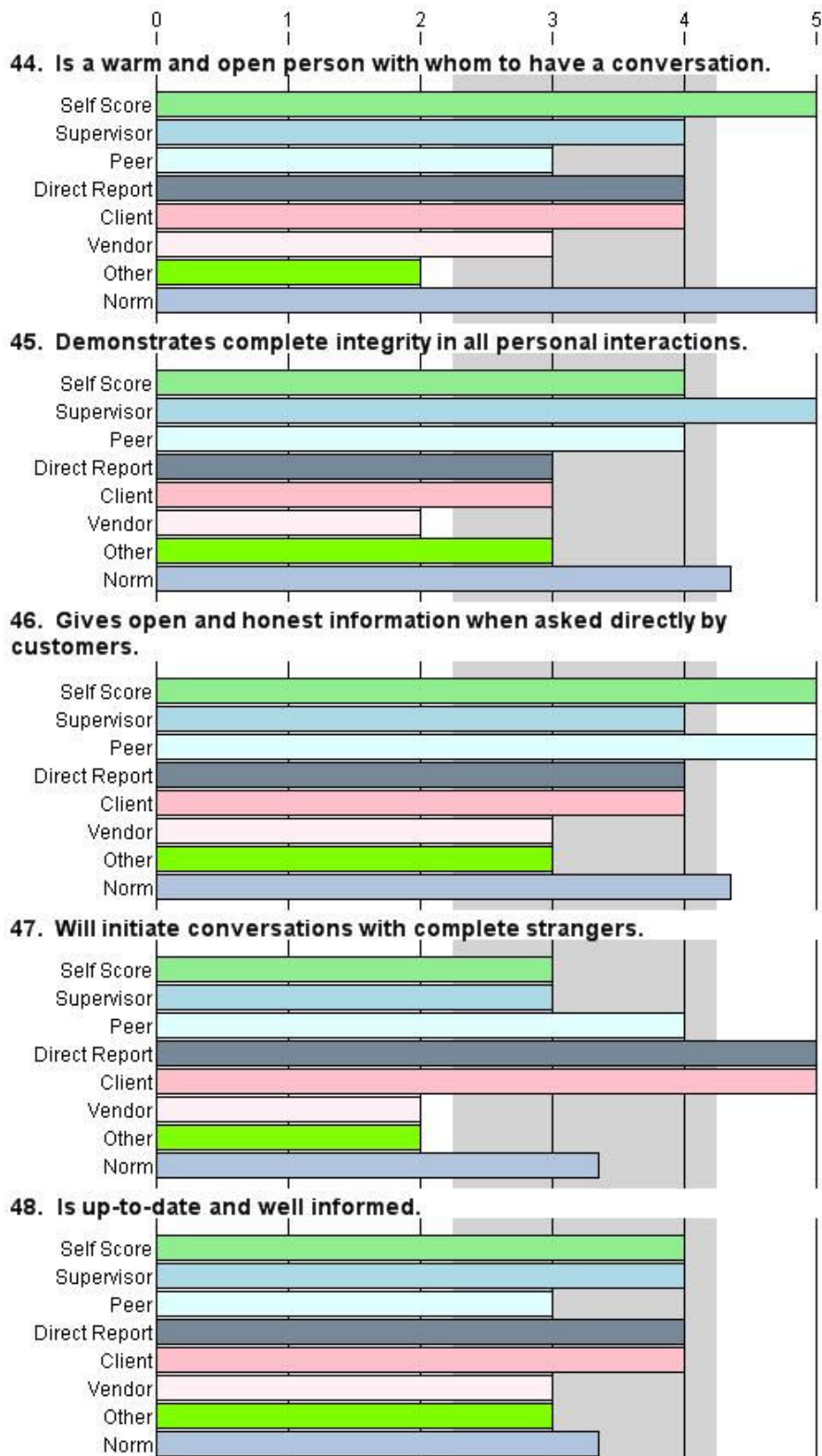
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") suggest 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 scorer tends to enjoy being a contact or potential customer communication "hub," and is generally seen as a well connected person. He or she is therefore both a useful data resource and a good "first port of call" for sales contacts to share their ideas or the challenges they face. High scorers are able to offer solutions to their customers' problems.







Communication Skills looks at the extent to which you listen, respond and provide genuine feedback to your contacts in order to strengthen all your sales relationships. It asks the question: "How effectively are you at maintaining open and honest dialogue with people in your network in order to establish efficient communication channels?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers should spend as much time as they can collecting useful data, information, and news and then carefully assess 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 building relationships. It can also be used when initiating relationships with new contacts and relative strangers.

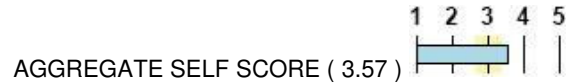
Ways to Strengthen or Improve Communication Skills

- Keep files and folders for useful articles, ideas, news stories, clippings, and other data you read or see that you think will be interesting to others or worthy of follow up to help your sales effort.
- Who might benefit from your product, information, or services? Who will find it interesting and welcome contact? Use the excuse to talk and learn more about your contact to deepen your relationship.
- Start to think about the different prospects or customer audiences with whom you have to communicate or interact. Develop a list of variations in approach and content that you should have at the ready.
- Develop a series of sales presentation scripts that you can deliver flawlessly and with total confidence in a range of different situations.



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?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

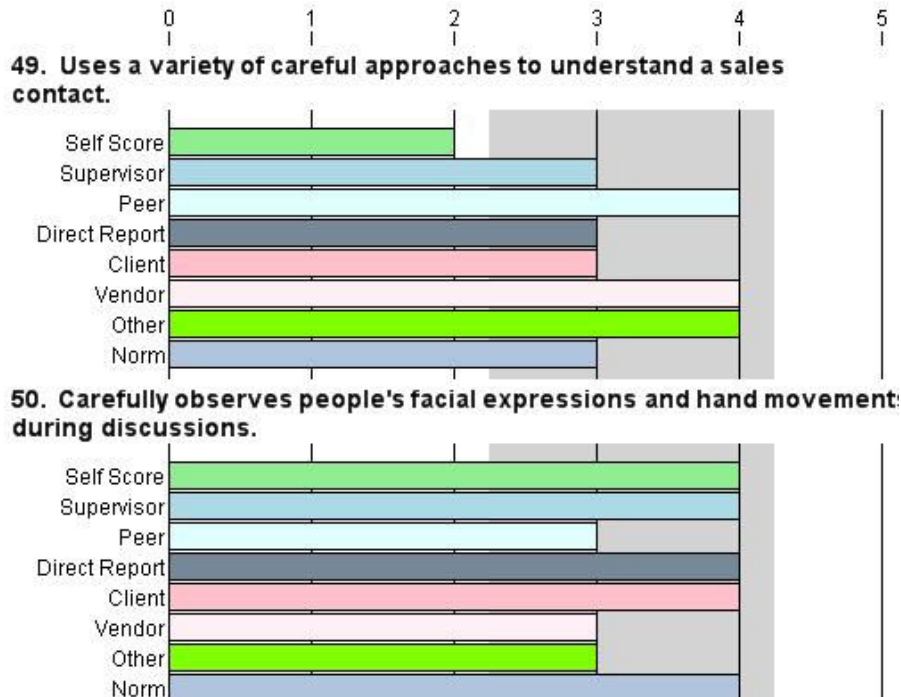
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest that you are less concerned with or even "blind" to the needs of specific sales prospects and customers you meet. You might also be overly transactional in your dealings with people, thinking more about your own needs rather than those of other people.

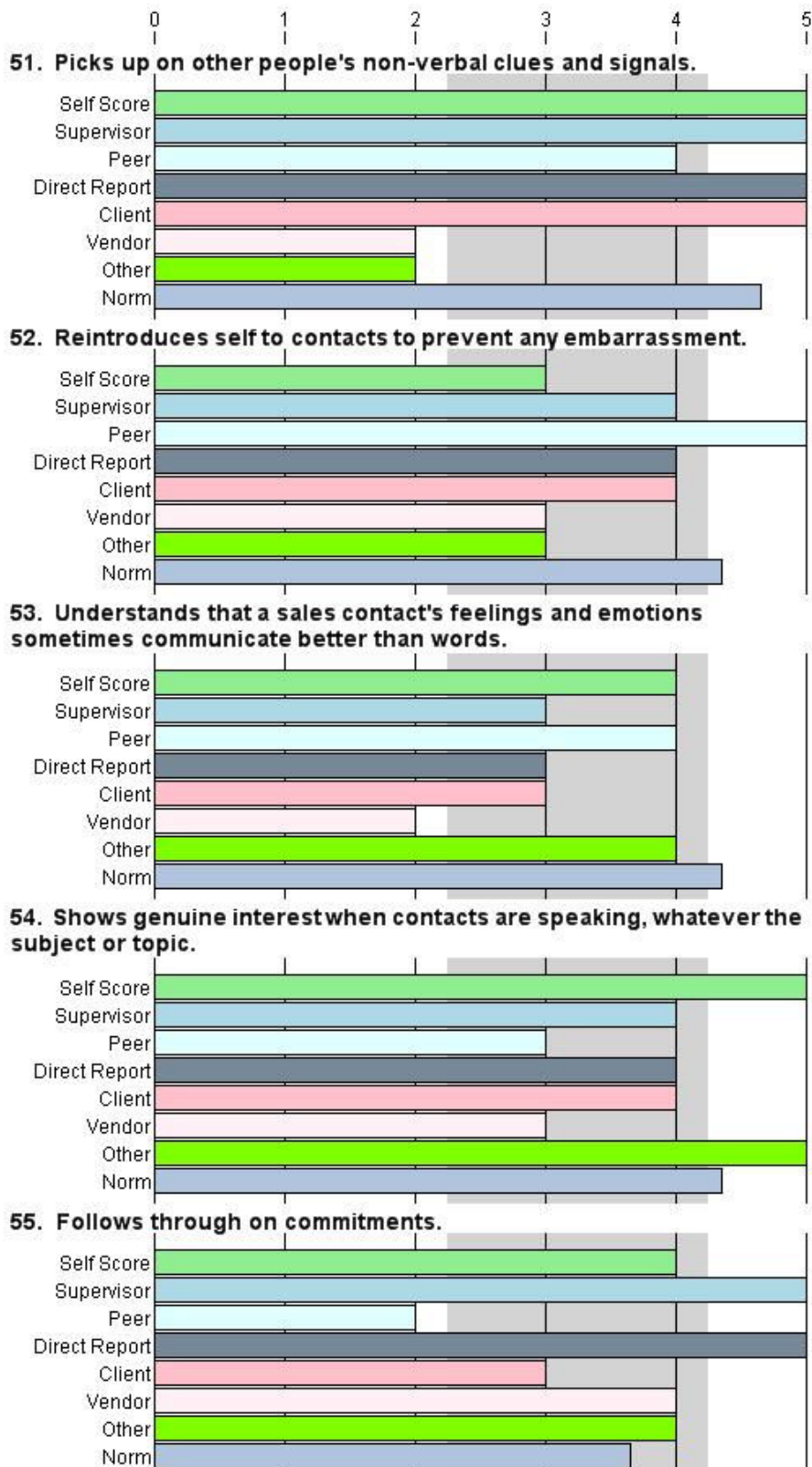
A low scorer tends to have only brief sales conversations and meetings and is prone to focus only on what are perceived to be significant or important points of discussion (ignoring small talk or minor social exchange). Low scorers often forget people's names and sometimes fail to recall details from past conversations.

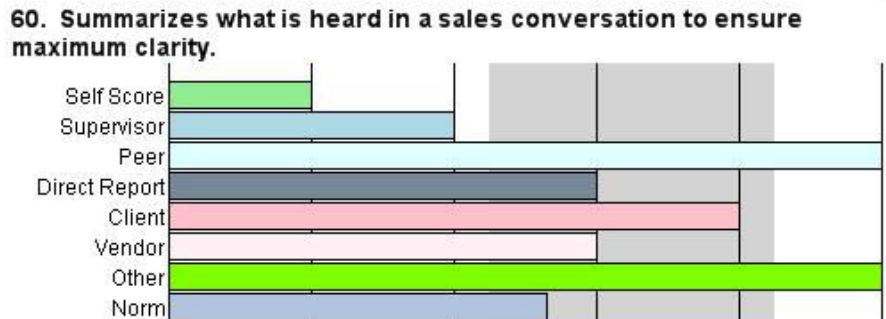
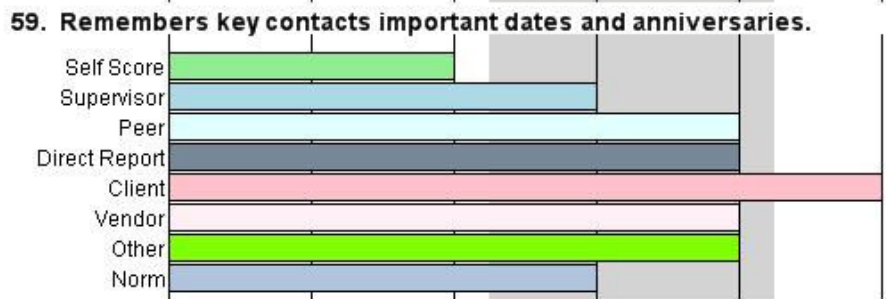
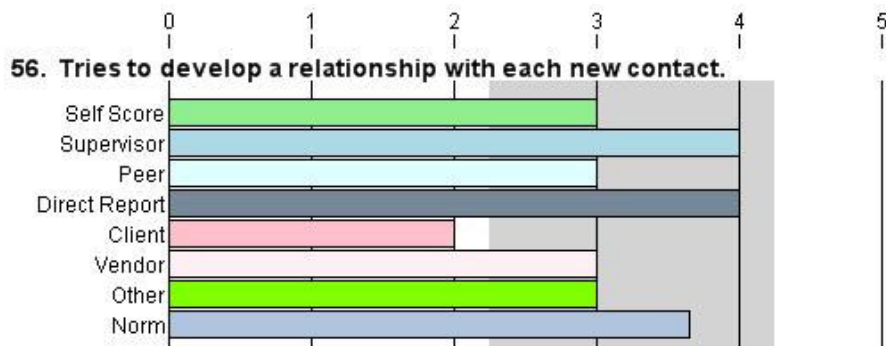
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") suggest 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 scorer is more likely to quickly build empathy in an interaction and learn minor details about the person that can be used in future conversations. Such people give much of themselves to others without ever feeling that they have to balance how much is given versus how much is received.







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?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to spend more time thinking about the values, goals, and concerns of their sales contacts. Having done this, they should look for ways to be supportive by offering ideas, suggestions, and general advice. Such support should be genuine and warmly offered with good eye contact. Try hard to remember details and personal facts from prior conversations.

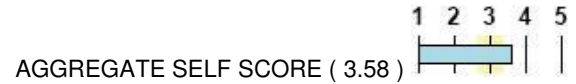
Ways to Strengthen or Improve Relationship Nurturing Ability

- Try to be as positive and sincere as possible in all your conversations with your sales contacts.
- 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.
- Before you meet with a sales prospect, think about what his or her goals and concerns might be regarding what you are offering, and how the individual will react. Then have a plan to respond to any objections or issues that are raised.



EXCEEDING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS SKILLS

Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills looks at the extent to which the individual has their "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 in order to provide service excellence to your customers?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest mean that you spend little or no time tuning in to the external commercial environment or the changing needs or demands of customers. Any external business information you have is likely to be limited or out of date because you are not keeping up.

Low scorers are more likely to face market surprises because they do not have well-developed networks of sources for information about changes to the economy, competitors, or customer needs. Their decisions are not based on a sound, up-to-date external market contexts or reasonable knowledge of what is happening that is important to the customer.

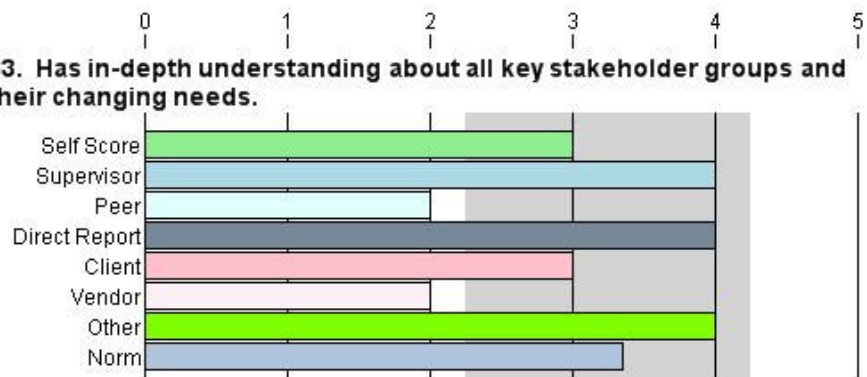
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings 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.

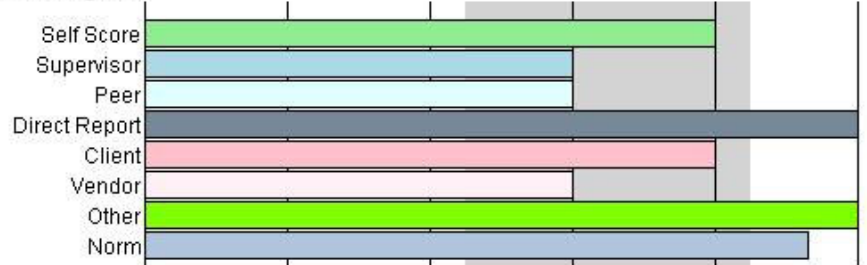
A high scorer is likely to invest a considerable amount of time and energy in developing effective sources of information both inside and outside their organization. High scorers value and nurture relationships with a wide variety of individuals and groups in different functions and businesses. This is done by building a strong contact network and maintaining a healthy, inquisitive interest in the commercial world at large.



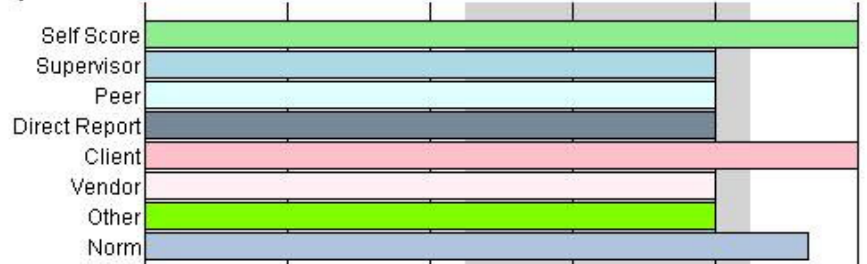
63. Has in-depth understanding about all key stakeholder groups and their changing needs.



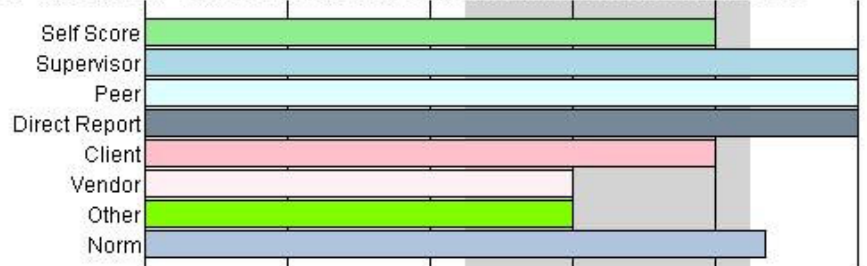
64. Provides clear guidance to customers about what to expect and how best to get it.



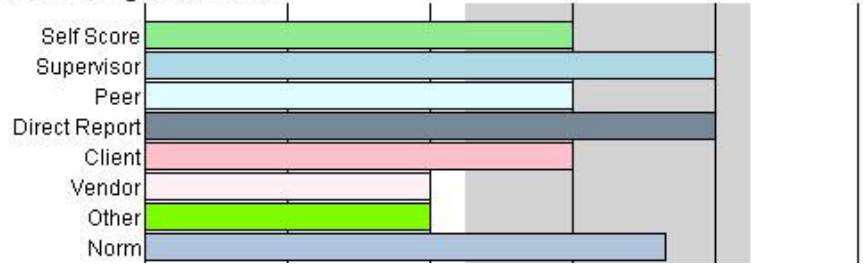
65. Continually improves processes to meet and exceed customer expectations.

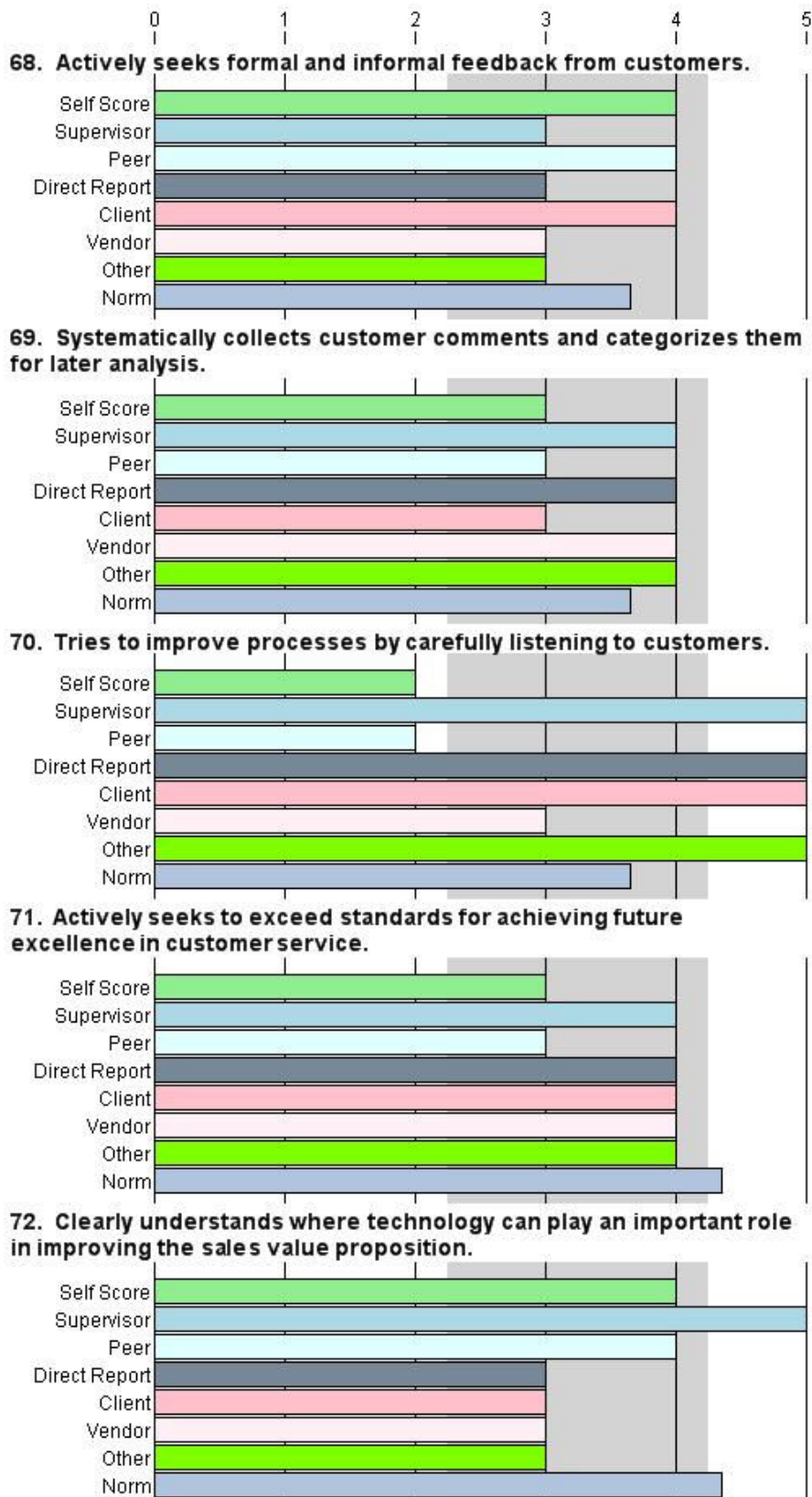


66. Has a clear vision of what service excellence should look like.



67. Compares process performance and results with best-in-class external organizations.





Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills looks at the extent to which the individual has their "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 in order to provide service excellence to your customers?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to spend more time talking about the industry in general with 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 and shifts in consumer attitudes or expectations so you can better inform and serve your customers.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Exceeding Customer Expectations

- Read more widely and regularly to keep up to date about market trends and what is going on in best practice enterprises and other innovative industries and sectors.
- Take a greater interest in customer feedback, and actively communicate with customers so you know the strengths and weaknesses of what they are being offered and how things can 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 or not a targeted performance area is at a sufficiently competitive level for customer needs.



DRIVE AND PERSISTANCE 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 in order to achieve better outcomes through people?"



Interpretation

LOW (less than 2.75)

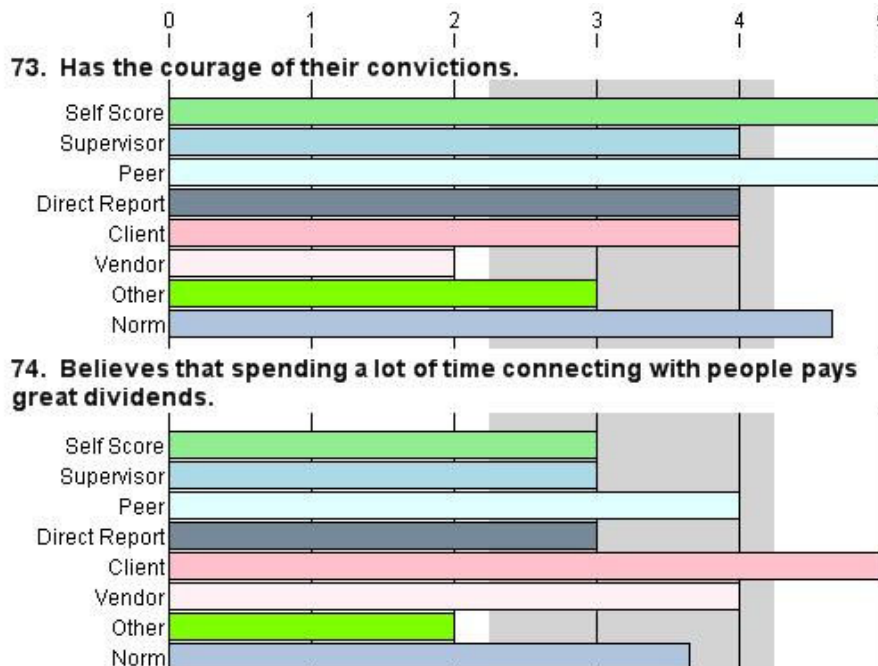
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("almost never" and "occasionally") suggest that you often become distracted or overly affected by obstacles and difficulties that arise when you are trying to build your customer base. Selling and general prospecting efforts are more likely to be conducted at random, or spontaneously, and followed through with inadequate passion or energy.

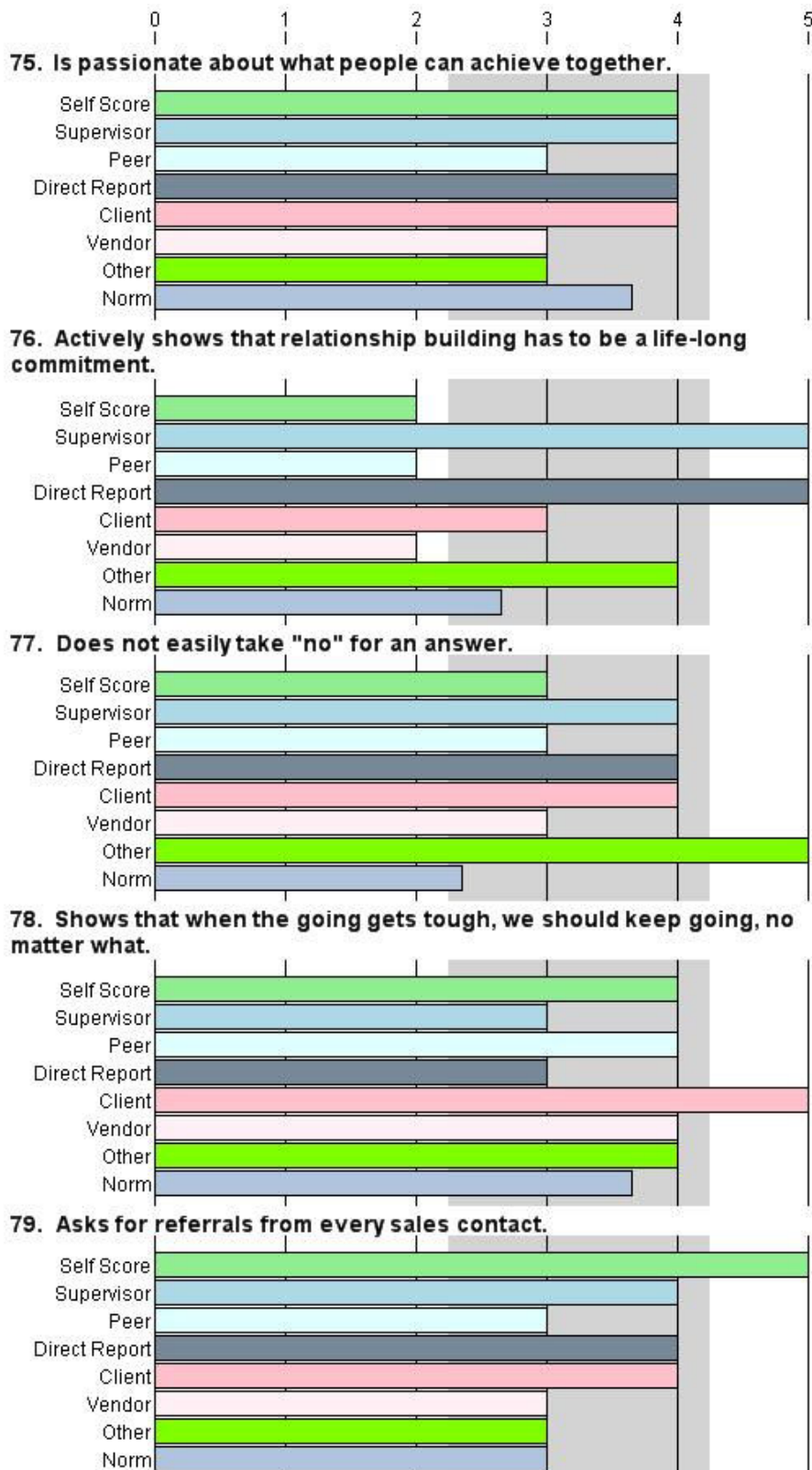
A low scorer will tend to have only a limited commitment to achieving better results through people and all too often prefers to take on difficult tasks or projects alone. Such people are more likely to lose faith in their own ability to achieve some of their sales tasks or goals and occasionally let their customers down or fail to deliver on a promise or commitment.

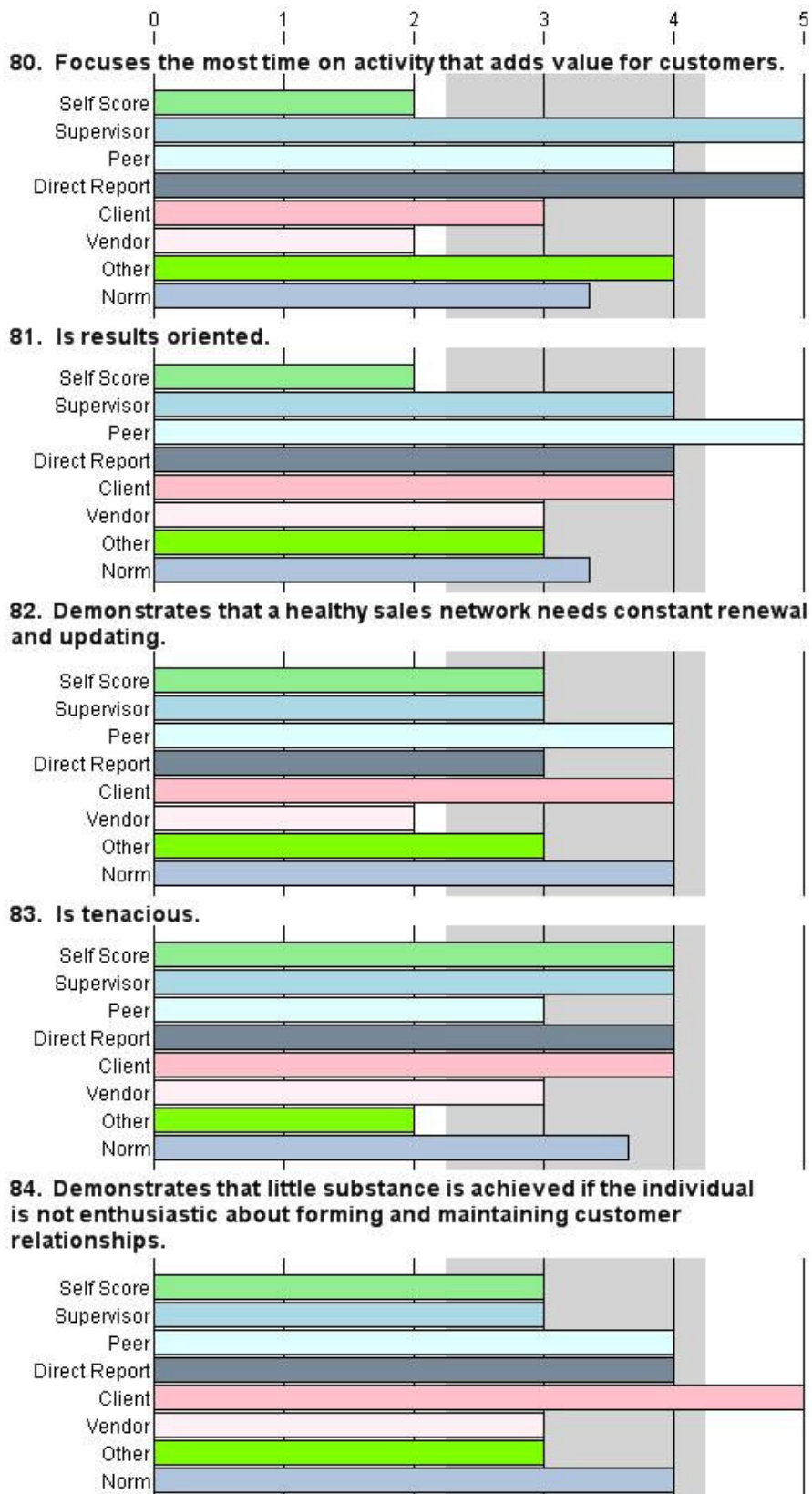
HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("very frequently" and "almost always") suggest 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 scorer tends to be naturally enthusiastic about his or her customer relationships and often goes out of his or her way to find opportunities to involve people in goals or challenges (other people's and their own). Such people are more likely to take their sales commitments seriously and work hard to achieve results in order to help all their customers become successful over the long term.







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 in order to achieve better outcomes through people?"

Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to think carefully about the whole sales cycle as it relates to each customer and make sure they are relentless in putting in as much effort and resources as it takes to fully meet and even exceed their promises. They also need to demonstrate hard work, determination, and tenacity at all times.

Ways to Strengthen or Improve Drive and Persistence

- Even in the face of obstacles, remain committed by sticking to your sales prospecting plans.
- Celebrate your successes, rather than worry about your failures.
- Make a careful note of commitments that you make and 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 who might be able to help you. Take steps to organize these at the earliest possible opportunity and gain commitment when you need someone's help.
- Expect an occasional "no sale" or rejection. Get into the habit of asking your prospective customer what else you could have done to close the deal, and see if they can recommend anyone else who might be interested in your product or service.



THE 10/10 REPORT

Top 10 Strengths

Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills

- 65 .Continually improves processes to meet and exceed customer expectations. 4.29
66 .Has a clear vision of what service excellence should look like. 4.14

Communication Skills

- 37 .Uses multiple channels to get sales messages across to people. 4.14

Organizational Skills

- 16 .Can quickly find the name, address, and phone number of all contacts and prospects. 4.14

Relationship-Nurturing Ability

- 54 .Shows genuine interest when contacts are speaking, whatever the subject or topic. 4.00

- 51 .Picks up on other people's non-verbal clues and signals. 4.00

Communication Skills

- 46 .Gives open and honest information when asked directly by customers. 4.00

Active-Listening Skills

- 30 .Avoids trivializing the ideas or views expressed by other people when talking with them. 4.00

- 29 .Listens enthusiastically and positively. 4.00

Drive and Persistence Skills

- 78 .Shows that when the going gets tough, we should keep going, no matter what. 3.86

Top 10 Development Needs

Temperament/Disposition

- 5 .Is at ease in groups of people. 2.86

Organizational Skills

- 24 .Is highly organized. 2.86

Temperament/Disposition

- 4 .Is good at "reading" other people. 3.00

Active-Listening Skills

- 26 .Makes sure to be in the right frame of mind for all important sales discussions. 3.00

Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills

- 67 .Compares process performance and results with best-in-class external organizations. 3.00

Organizational Skills

- 22 .Quickly follows up on committed actions with notes, letters, e-mails, etc. 3.14

Communication Skills

- 38 .Trusts and follows personal intuition about people and relationships. 3.14

Relationship-Nurturing Ability

- 56 .Tries to develop a relationship with each new contact. 3.14

Exceeding Customer Expectations Skills

- 62 .Keeps abreast of new or leading-edge business thinking. 3.14

- 63 .Has in-depth understanding about all key stakeholder groups and their changing needs. 3.14



COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS

The following are general reading and course suggestions that may help you to better understand the two categories in which your scores were the lowest and to assist you in writing your development plan.

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?"

Course Suggestion

- Dealing With People
- Emotional Intelligence
- Influencing Others
- Cultural Awareness and Diversity
- Personal Empathy Building

Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion

- Dig Your Well Before You're Thirsty : The Only Networking Book You'll Ever Need. Harvey Mackay
- The One Minute Sales Person. Spencer Johnson: Avon Books
- Be Seen Get Known Move Ahead. Robyn Henderson
- How to Speak, How to Listen. Mortimer Jerome Adler
- Emotional Intelligence. Daniel P. Goleman

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?"

Course Suggestion

- Thinking/Planning Ahead
- Planning Methods/Approaches
- Scheduling Skills
- Prioritization Skills
- Time Management

Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

Reading Suggestion

- Make Your Connections Count : The Six-Step System to Build Your Meganetwork. Melissa Giovagnoli
- First Things First. Stephen Covey and Rebecca Merrill: Simon and Schuster
- 30 Minutes to Improve Your Networking Skills. Hilton Catt and Patricia Scudamore
- The Art of Doing Nothing. Veronique Cienne and Erica Lennard: Clarkson Potter



DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Use the space below to write out your personal development plan for the next 12 months based on your results. Draw upon the general improvement actions in relevant areas of the report, and ideas that are suggested in the attached coaching tips.

Is at ease in groups of people.
Action to Take:

Score: 2.86

Is highly organized.
Action to Take:

Score: 2.86

Is good at "reading" other people.
Action to Take:

Score: 3.00

Makes sure to be in the right frame of mind for all important sales discussions.
Action to Take:

Score: 3.00

Compares process performance and results with best-in-class external organizations.
Action to Take:

Score: 3.00

Temperament/Disposition

Is at ease in groups of people.

For some of us it can be daunting to walk into a room full of people we don't know, but then that is one of the key challenges in the selling process. The more group get-togethers or functions you attend, the easier it will become. Although this might take a little time at the beginning, you should assume that you are likely to meet at least one person you know at every function. This includes trade functions, shows, exhibitions, conferences, seminars, and presentations. If you don't meet at least one person you know, you probably have work to do. Getting out there and meeting new and different people is how to do that. The more people you add to your network, the more at ease and confident you will be in groups of people.

Consider the following to improve your effectiveness in this area:

- Aim to attend social functions regularly by putting them on your calendar as firm commitments. Social interaction creates a nurturing environment and will give you a sense of belonging.
- Be prepared. Do your homework and find out all you can about the function you are attending, who is likely to be there, what sort of topics are going to be discussed. This will help put you more at ease and increase your levels of comfort in talking to others.
- Always know your role and why you are there. This means that you should have an action plan and try to seek out people who have common goals and needs and share information with them. After all, it is easier to feel at ease with people who have common interests.
- Be prepared to initiate conversations rather than waiting for people to speak to you. Prepare a short introduction such as, "Hello, my name is John Smith. I work for ABC company, and we specialize in the design of turbo engines."
- Try to support others who look nervous or ill at ease. Seek out first timers, and make them feel welcome.
- Observe the behavior and interaction of others in group situations and look to contribute to conversations that are of interest or where you think you will have something to offer.
- View every social event you attend and every place you meet people as a networking opportunity. When we are busy, we tend to focus on the immediate task we face and overlook the broader possibilities that are created by chatting informally with others.

Organizational Skills

Is highly organized.

If others were asked to describe you, would they describe you as an organized person? It's sometimes difficult to get a straight answer from others, so perhaps it is not much use to ask them yourself. But you can work it out for yourself. Think about those people who you find to be organized, and compare yourself to them. How do you measure up?

To become better organized, consider these strategies:

1. Just what is it that you are trying to do? Do you know what is expected of you? Job descriptions never seem to be quite as precise as they should be: they are works in progress, which is probably unavoidable in any organization that is reasonably dynamic. But check to make sure: are you getting dumped with stuff that really should be going to someone else? This is not your problem, but the problem of the person in the organization just above you: make sure that they solve it, not you. Take on more than you are officially meant to be doing, if you believe that that is the right thing to do, but be careful of being exploited. Being organized is all about successfully achieving outcomes, and you can only do that if you do not ignore the obvious and ask, "What am I supposed to be doing?"
2. Do you know what your style is? Big picture people can see the wood for the trees, and can cut through trivia to see trends, synthesize viewpoints, and plot strategy. Big picture people, however, are often not good with detail. Detail people are, obviously, good with detail: they are meticulous and take pains to ensure that things are well done. They might, however, miss the point of what is really going on around them. To be better organized, you need to understand your dominant style, and if you have a weakness in the opposing skill set, do what you can to strengthen your ability there. Big picture people need to be aware of the details more often, while detail people need to avoid getting too bogged down with details and see what's really going on in general.
3. Don't forget the housekeeping. Just as big picture people need to familiarize themselves sometimes with details, so do we all need to take seriously the question of everything in its place and a place for every thing. Take time to tidy up, or give tidying up a higher priority. When someone asks, "Where's the...?" make sure that you can answer and be the first to answer. Amaze others, and amaze yourself.
4. The more in control of your environment you are, the more in control of events you will be. Fix the inside, and the outside will be so much easier to fix. Know not only the where of things and people, but also the why, when, what, who, and how.
5. Be careful not to become obsessive about control and organization. There is no point in spending so much time on preparing to act that there is no time left for action. Organization is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Be ready to be flexible and to act without all of the facts or resources at your disposal: if you have been organized enough, you will probably have enough facts and resources to see you through. It's messy, but reality usually is.

Temperament/Disposition

Is good at “reading” other people.

Non-verbal communication is a very important part of human communication. Non-verbal communication, sometimes popularly known as body language, can be like a second language for any of us. It can reveal so much about what goes on in the world that it makes sense to learn as much about it as possible. Here’s some clues on how to “read” other people through their body language:

1. We can make reasonable inferences about people’s inner state of mind by attempting to decode gestures. For example, gestures might help suggest the following:

- Frustration (clenched fists/teeth, shaking head, pursed lips, rolling eyes)
- Approval (thumbs up gesture, broad smile, nodding)
- Superiority (feet on desk or on chair, hands clasped behind head, leaning back posture, relaxed while others are tense, looking down the nose at others, raised eyebrows, sarcastic vocal inflections, and sighing noises)
- Boredom (glazed expression, out-of-focus eyes, drumming fingers, tapping toes, yawning, slumped posture, monotonous vocal inflection)
- Intense liking/desire (half-closed eyes, slow blinking, enlarged pupils, licking of lips, flaring of nostrils, moving forward posture, touching)

2. Effective salespeople are aware that the space between communicators speaks volumes. Generally speaking, city-bred people stand closer to each other than country-bred people, and affectionate, aggressive, or insensitive people move very close to other people. Such territorial behavior can also be seen in parking lots and roads (where drivers compete for spaces with an aggression that seems totally out of proportion to the situation), and elevators and public transportation (where enforced closeness compels people to discourage interaction with others by simply breaking eye contact). Effective salespeople respect the personal space needs of others.

3. Effective salespeople are also aware that non-verbal communication varies enormously from culture to culture. Whether traveling overseas or simply interacting with people from within a multicultural society, effective communicators make it their business to find out how the same gestures and postures might be interpreted in different settings.

4. The effective salesperson knows about fake body language. Popular literature about non-verbal communication and body language has been around for about 30 years now, and many people have studied it—some seriously, some superficially. It’s common in card games for players to fake body language as part of the bluffing or dissembling processes: it doesn’t make much sense, for example, to react to an outstanding hand by raising your eyebrows and laughing triumphantly (then again, that might be a bluff). You would be unwise to be taken in by first impressions in these situations, and in others, so be careful trying to read people’s minds by “reading” their body language.

Active-Listening Skills

Ensures that they are in the right frame of mind for all important sales discussions.

The way in which we interact with others in the outside world depends heavily on what is going on inside our minds. We need to stay focused on just what is happening around us. This is not simply because if we are miles away in our mind, we will miss crucial things, but also because it is the only way in which we can fully participate in communicating with others. Here's how to stay on the ball:

- 1.** Feel comfortable with putting things aside, knowing that you can return to them. For example, have a good filing system so that you know where to find things later on. Filing systems can be physical (paper, cardboard, metal cabinets) and can be data-based (in computer software), but they can also be within our minds. If our mental filing systems are messy, then we will be reluctant to put matters to one side in order to concentrate on just what is going on around us because we will be fearful of forgetting or letting go of a train of thought. Learn how to mentally file, to compartmentalize, and to remember so that you can switch attention to other matters.
- 2.** Learn to put strong and distracting emotions aside. It's a mistake to drive when you are angry or are having an argument for obvious reasons: the strong emotion might distract you from driving safely. The same goes for when you are participating in a discussion: whatever is preoccupying you, learn to put such preoccupations aside when you need to pay attention to what someone else is saying. This is not to denigrate or demean strong feelings; it is in fact to recognize the potency of those feelings and recognize their power to distract you from more immediate matters. You don't have to become a cold fish: if the feelings are genuine, they will still be there when you return to them as will the issues that triggered those strong feelings.
- 3.** Be wary of any tendencies you might have to daydream, to be miles away, or to glaze over. It's very easy to do this when the topic under discussion is boring, and indeed it's very understandable. But when things get boring, the best approach is to intervene and change the track of what is being talked about, rather than going on strike mentally. If your time is being wasted, then probably others' time is being wasted too. Don't drift away—jump in.
- 4.** Clear your mind of all distractions and focus on the here and now in all of your sales discussions. Be receptive and alert, but not uncritical. Take it all in, and process it. Listen, compare, connect, analyze. Never believe that paying attention is not hard work, because it is.

Exceeding Customer Expectations

Compares process performance and results with best-in-class external organizations.

Even in circumstances where external benchmarking is widely and regularly practiced, the focus is often only to look at “input” processes or those processes that achieve an internal benefit or outcome. It is therefore important not to forget that ultimate process performance results also need to be measured if for no other reason than to make sure that all the internal improvement effort has been worthwhile.

Ideally, the results that an organization manages to achieve will be compared to best-in-class enterprises. This ensures that there is no complacency about achievements where they are not as good as they might be. If the organization wants to be the best, we must ensure that our efforts are truly competitive by engaging in this kind of benchmarking effort at a number of different levels. In many cases, it is the salespeople (who are most closely in touch with customer needs) who will drive this effort.

Consider the following steps to help improve your overall effectiveness:

1. As process improvement or change activity is implemented, start to evaluate end results and outcomes that are being achieved (e.g., faster service, better prices, greater market share, lower rates of complaint, customer defections, etc.). Use this information to assess where to apply benchmarking comparisons with other external organizations.
2. For each relevant process for your team or organization, look for the external organizations that seem to achieve best-in-class results or the best performance for the type of enterprise or industry, etc.
3. Compare your personal or team results to those of the best-in-class enterprises and assess the gap (if any) and the reasons why differences may exist.
4. Develop open relationships with these external best-in-class enterprises to ensure that comparisons are fair and that any change targets that you set are realistic and appropriate.
5. Don't forget to reciprocate your best process performance outcomes to other non-competitive organizations to ensure that the relationships grow and develop.
6. In the final analysis, make sure that you ask your customers who they think performs the best and why (and take steps to do something about it when it is a competitor).