



HIRE A SIX

For many years as a sales manager, I would only hire the stereotypical sales representative. You know the type—on a human relations continuum or scale of zero to ten, with the ten representing a candidate who is totally gregarious and outgoing and the zero, someone who is introverted with few people skills, I'd always recruit the ten. As an advisor to businesses and professional service firms on how to build an effective sales team, I would also council my clients to hire "tens." Big mistake!

Pareto's principle (the 80/20 Rule) is vividly illustrated in most industries by the fact that 80 percent of the sales are closed by only 20 percent of the sales professionals. After 24 years of working with literally thousands of sales representatives and service industry professionals as an advisor, trainer and coach, I have learned an important truth--that the ten personality is rarely found in the ranks of the top 20 percent of the sales professionals who produce 80 percent of the sales. For this reason alone, I now hire candidates that fall about a six on the personality continuum and I council my clients to do the same.

Why hire a six? Because the six personality makes up the vast majority of today's top sales producers. And they are successful at selling, simply because they have a six personality. They are a bit reserved and a lot less outgoing than the ten, but they still have the people skills to communicate well. They do less talking than a ten and they listen better, giving them a decided edge in communicating effectively. Although six personalities have less charisma than a ten, they have a much greater ability to deal with the details of the selling process. This helps them to consistently find new prospects and to organize their day to get more done than an eight or ten personality. Their ability to produce leads, the effective use of time and their systematic approach to presentations, gives the six personality a selling edge. Most sales professionals with a ten personality absolutely loath prospecting, paperwork and organizing themselves, so they simply rely on their personality and charm to achieve their sales objectives.

You have to hire smart to develop a sales team that are all "top producers." You don't have to live with an 80/20 rule sales team, if you truly understand the personality of the sales or service industry professionals who make up the 20 percent and then only hire candidates that fall into this demographic. However, there's one problem with this suggestion. You rarely can find a candidate that is in the top 20 percent, who is actively looking for new employment. And, a company or firm would be crazy to let their top producers leave them. Most employers usually do everything in their power to retain their best performers. Your only recourse then is to hire someone from the 80 percent grouping with potential to be a top producer. And how to do this must be the topic for another article

Best wishes for continued sales success.

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VIRDEN THORNTON is the founder and President of The Selling Edge®, Inc. a firm specializing in sales, customer relations, and management training and development. Clients have included Sears Optical, Eastman Kodak, IBM, Deloitte & Touché, Bank One, Jefferson Pilot, and Wal-Mart to name a few. Virden is the author of *Prospecting: The Key To Sales Success* and the best selling *Building & Closing the Sale*, *Fifty-Minute* series books and *Close That Sale*, a video/audio tape series published by Crisp Publications, Inc. Menlo Park, California. He has also authored a *Self-Directed Learning* series of sales, coaching & team development, telemarketing, and personal productivity training guides.

Virden teaches for the Center For Professional Development, Texas Tech University at Lubbock, Texas and in the School Of Entrepreneurship, J. Willard And Alice S. Marriott School Of Management at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. You can contact Virden at: Virden@TheSellingEdge.com.

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