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Product Review - Success Profiler



Hedging the Hiring Bet

By Joseph Dobrian

Product:

Success Profiler

Purposes:

To determine if a person has the cognitive skills, personality and sales savvy to make it in real estate sales, or to spot the areas in which an agent could use further training.

Contact:

Upward Motion
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Toronto, Ontario
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416-740-1333
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Price:

\$49.95 per test, with volume discounts available.

Comment:

This group of three tests combines standard intelligence and personality assessments with a video simulator (much like a flight or driving simulator) that measures the subject's selling skills in four critical areas: building rapport and acquiring information; listening and comprehension skills; managing the sales process; closing skills.

Success Profiler is administered via computer, with a CD or over the Internet. The simulator segment walks the subject through various situations encounter as a real estate Broker: the naïve kid who doesn't know much except that he wants to buy an apartment; the idle shopper; the husband and wife who can't agree on what kind of dwelling they want.

This reporter took the whole battery of tests (approximately an hour's work) and found them easy to take, helpful and accurate. The cognitive ability and personality tests were similar to other tests that have been around for many years—and probably their longevity is due to their reliability. The simulation portion of the test is particularly exciting. In it, the subject is given a video clip of a prospective buyer explaining his needs, stating his reservations or reacting to a sales pitch. The subject has a choice of four responses, each of which triggers another video clip. These clips are more helpful than a written "How would you respond?" since they incorporate clues such as body language and vocal intonation, to which a good salesperson must be attuned.

Via Internet hookup, scoring and assessment comes back a few seconds after completion of the test. The scoring charts are easy to read, and the verbal assessment (about 1,300 words) is clear and apparently accurate, if the following condensed evaluation of this reporter's abilities is any indicator:

“Overall, Joseph Dobrian exhibits satisfactory levels of key competencies; however, he may have a negative attitude about the activity of sales and may not enjoy a career in sales.

“Joseph Dobrian is very good at opening the sales process. He has strong rapport-building skills and has the ability to gain clients’ trust and regard. He has a highly developed ability to uncover clients’ needs and decision-making criteria. He has excellent listening and comprehension skills and manages the sales process well. He has good closing skills. Joseph knows how to obtain a commitment and has the ability to make the client feel good about the purchasing decision. However, at times Joseph may not display an appropriate level of assertiveness when closing deals.”

The personality profile is apparently the killer: “Joseph is introverted, reserved and not very assertive. He is not especially fond of meeting new people and prefers to work alone or in small, stable groups. Joseph will probably not enjoy a career in real estate sales.”

The test is available on CD or downloadable via an Internet link; individuals can also log onto Upward Motion’s Website (www.upwardmotion.com) and take the test on-line. The third option is not viable unless you have high-speed Internet access, since its very slow using standard dial-up service. The charge (\$49.95 per test, with volume discounts available—as little as \$20 each for 1,000 tests) occurs when the user sends in the test to be graded.

Upward Motion’s president, Kim Ades, admits that it’s easy to “fake good” on the personality test, since it doesn’t take a genius to figure out that you’re supposed to come across as an extroverted, optimistic go-getter. “But any personality test is easy to fake,” she contends.

The personality test is very much along the lines of the standard salesman’s personality test, a version of which the reader will probably remember having taken at some point in life. It’s particularly geared to sales aptitude; it’s not a generalized personality test of the Myers-Briggs type.

The cognitive-skills test looks very much like a standard IQ test, consisting of 40 multiple-choice questions to be answered in 12 minutes. The real estate sales simulator focuses on residential sales, but its principles could easily be applied to a commercial leasing or sales broker.

The tests do not necessarily provide a set-in-stone profile of the subject. Sales techniques can be improved with maturity and education, and subtle changes in personality occur throughout one’s life, but the tests do appear to give an accurate snapshot of a person as he was on the day of the test.

Ades points out that the tests—the simulation in particular—might help a real estate executive to find hidden gems during the selection process. “We tested one broker, a million-dollar-a-year guy, who warned us, ‘I’m not the typical broker; I might not do so well,’” she recalls, “and sure enough he scored quite low in personality, but on the sales simulation he was the highest we’d ever seen. He admitted that he was the kind of guy who might have been passed over in an ordinary interview.”

That’s as may be. Interesting as the tests were, they confirmed this reporter’s resolve to stay out of sales.