

plum

PRESENTS

TALENT TRENDS

Uncovering Talent Supply & Demand

Sales Professional Edition

What are organizations looking for and who is applying?

SPRING2018

SPRING2018 Sales Professional Edition

Powered by the scalability of Artificial Intelligence and the deep insight of Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Plum helps companies hire, grow, and retain top talent. Since Plum's launch in 2012, over 180,000 people have taken our assessment, thousands of job experts have told us what kind of applicants they want to hire, and our proprietary database contains **24 trillion deep behavioral data points** at time of publication.

That's a lot of data – data that we just couldn't keep to ourselves!

That's why, on a regular basis, we will leverage our unique human potential datasets to answer frequently asked customer questions in our Talent Trends Report. Additionally, this insight will...

- Expose opportunities/risks that exist between job seekers and those sourcing talent.
- Provide a primarily North American perspective on changing talent needs.

By quantifying and analyzing the potential of applicants and employees, we strive to help organizations prepare for the future of work, in which many employers will need to migrate workforces from jobs displaced by automation to net new jobs.

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Sales Professional Trends Across...

96

Companies

226

Job Experts

15,421

Applicants

One of the largest groups in our proprietary database is applicants for sales professional and quota-carrying roles, such as business development reps, inside sales reps, sales associates, and sales managers. In an analysis of our 2017 data, we saw some interesting trends and gaps between what hiring teams desired in a sales professional, and the typical sales professional applicant profile. So for our first Talent Trends Report, we thought it was appropriate to examine trends across 15,421 sales professional applicants across 96 different companies.

We were most surprised by the discrepancy between what the hiring team was looking for in a sales professional, and what the actual profile of a typical sales professional applicant looked like. Most notably, although **many sales professional applicants demonstrated a high degree of assertiveness, 0% of job experts thought that assertiveness was the top priority** for sales professionals in their organization.

Are you looking for “sharks” to fill your sales roles because they fit the “aggressive salesperson” stereotype? Read on to find out why assertiveness may not translate to on-the-job success in your sales hires.



Applicants score high in

ASSERTIVENESS

is never the top priority for success in the role according to job experts



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Key Findings

	INDUSTRIOUSNESS	ORDERLINESS	STABILITY	ASSERTIVENESS
In Most Organizations, it's...	A Top Priority	A Top Priority	A Top Priority	Not a Priority
Typical Sales Applicants...	Score High 31% of applicants are highly capable of aspiring to high sales targets and not giving up when roadblocks emerge.	Score Low only 14% of applicants will naturally keep track of progress toward targets and follow a plan to reach goals.	Score Low 19% of applicants won't falter under pressure to reach targets or when unexpected challenges arise.	Score High A high percentage (24%) of applicants may seem pushy to new prospects or interrupt during conversations.

Most Organizations

NEED: Salespeople with high...

INDUSTRIOUSNESS

These are people who are capable of aspiring to high sales targets and don't give up when roadblocks emerge.

ORDERLINESS

These are people who keep track of progress toward targets and follow a plan to reach goals.

STABILITY

These are people who won't falter under pressure to reach targets or when unexpected challenges arise.

DON'T NEED: Salespeople with high...

ASSERTIVENESS

These are people who can seem pushy to new prospects, may interrupt during conversations or act stubborn towards other members of the sales team.

Sales Professional Applicants score HIGHEST in...

which means they...

EXPERIENTIAL DISPOSITION

Likely thrive in a sales environment that offers new challenges

Learn and apply new sales skills and models

Are flexible to frequent changes in sales territories and pricing models

Initiate enhancements and integrate them well into existing sales plans and procedures

Work well with time-based cyclical sales targets

INDUSTRIOUSNESS

Aspire to high sales targets and don't give up when roadblocks emerge

Can keep pace with a high volume of work

Constantly work to improve their sales tactics and methodology

Perform best with deadlines and clear objectives

ASSERTIVENESS

Aren't afraid to provide evidence to back up their point and voice counterpoints to objections

Seek to be a driving force at whatever cost

Are more willing to be decisive than compromising when working with other sales team members

Prioritize persuasive communication over the feelings of the prospect

31% of sales professional applicants are exceptionally high in Industriousness



Sales Professional Applicants **score LOWEST in...**

which means they...

● **ORDERLINESS**

Tend to struggle with keeping track of progress toward targets and following plans to reach goals

May need support adhering to operational workflows and sales processes

Do not naturally track their efforts or steps taken to reach goals

PROBLEM SOLVING

May struggle with figuring out a solution to challenges that emerge during the sales process

Have difficulty addressing objections or challenges during the sales process

May face challenges identifying and recommending “win-win” solutions that can result in a closed deal

STABILITY

Tend to falter under pressure to reach targets or when unexpected challenges arise

May struggle progressing when unplanned objections, stakeholder involvement, or challenges arise

● **23%**

of sales professional applicants are extremely low in Orderliness



Organizations **NEED** applicants that score high in...

which means they...

INDUSTRIOUSNESS

- Drive to meet or exceed sales targets
- Persevere to overcome objections
- Are motivated to continuously improve their sales process

ORDERLINESS

- Are meticulous with funnel management and sales operations processes
- Are thorough and detail-oriented with customer needs
- Are organized when presenting to prospects

STABILITY

- Thrive in a fast-paced, high-pressure sales environment
- Are able to maintain composure when handling tough objections
- Are even-tempered in difficult prospect interactions

44%

of job experts agreed that Industriousness was the most important trait for the role



Prioritize attracting and identifying these talents when you write job descriptions, use psychometric assessments, and conduct interviews.



Organizations **DON'T NEED** applicants that score high in...

● **COMPASSION**

which means they...

- Prioritize empathy at the expense of a deal
- Make exceptions for individual circumstances
- Concede to objections

● **ASSERTIVENESS**

- Seem pushy to new prospects
- Interrupt during conversations
- Act stubborn towards other members of the sales team

INTELLECTUAL DISPOSITION

- Do things the way they want to, instead of following procedure
- Focus too much on the abstract at the expense of being practical
- Revise sales processes that aren't broken

● **0%**

of job experts thought that compassion or assertiveness were the most important trait for a sales professional



We get it – Hiring a sales professional isn't easy

Our aim in this report was to help you hire your next great sales professional. Getting a **high quantity of applicants** into your talent pipeline probably isn't the problem - but how do you pinpoint quality candidates in a sea of stereotypically assertive job applicants?

Tips for finding sales talent that will thrive in your organization

<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Typical Sales Applicants score low in:</p> <p>ORDERLINESS</p> <p>STABILITY</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>When interviewing, ask...</p> <p>“Describe a time when you had to work on multiple projects at a time.”</p> <p>“Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision under stress.”</p>
<p>KEEP IT GOING</p> <p>Typical Sales Applicants score HIGH in:</p> <p>INDUSTRIOUSNESS</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>Write Job Descriptions that...</p> <p>Include a detailed summary of how your sales team sets challenging goals.</p>
<p>PROBLEM</p> <p>Typical Sales Applicants score HIGH in:</p> <p>ASSERTIVENESS</p>	<p>SOLUTION</p> <p>Ask yourself during the interview...</p> <p>“Do I want to hire this person just because they fit the stereotype of the assertive salesperson?”</p>

About Plum

Plum's mission is to provide every employer with the data they need to predict with certainty the quality of their hires, develop their employees, and transform their company culture. 4X more predictive than a resume, Plum combines Artificial Intelligence with advanced Industrial/Organizational Psychology to predict which people have the greatest potential for succeeding in any role, in any organization.

Authors

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Leann Schneider is the Organizational Development Researcher at Plum. In this role she applies her passion for research-based practice, practical insight, and coaching-supported development to Plum's product development and client delivery.

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Neil MacGregor

Neil MacGregor is the Co-Founder and Director of Product at Plum. In his role, Neil unifies Industrial/Organizational Psychology and software development to address widespread market needs and drive sales for the business. He specializes in building tools that automate proven research, and that scale for use across companies of all sizes. He directs product development from early research, alpha and beta testing, product design, user feedback, and final software development for widespread use.

Neil's specialities include psychometric selection, personality-oriented job analysis, professional development, and the analysis of teams and organizational culture.

Plum Traits

Plum assesses applicants on 12 unique characteristics based on cognitive ability and the Five Factor Model.

Cognitive Ability	Problem Solving Understands complicated ideas, learns from experience, and analyzes information to choose the best solution.	Social Intelligence Effectively manages difficult interpersonal situations, knows the “right thing” to say, and understands others’ motivations and feelings.
Conscientiousness	Industriousness Maintains high standards, aspires to challenging goals, and willing to put forth extra effort.	Orderliness Acts deliberately, focused on quality, and prefers to be organized and have a plan.
Stress Tolerance	Stability Calm under pressure, even-tempered, and resistant to the effects of unexpected changes.	Self Regard Has a positive self-image, satisfied with who they are as a person, and self-assured and optimistic.
Openness	Intellectual Disposition Enjoys learning new things, interested in different ideas, and imaginative.	Experiential Disposition Seeks out new experiences, adapts to changes, and tolerant of differences between people.
Extraversion	Enthusiasm Interested in meeting new people, initiates conversations, and enjoys social interactions.	Assertiveness Voices opinions, comfortable being the center of attention, and gives direction to others.
Agreeableness	Compassion Shows empathy and warmth toward others, and is understanding and forgiving of mistakes.	Mannerliness Pleasant, willing to cooperate, polite, and considerate.