



SAMPLE REPORT ON FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Skills & Capabilities Assessments

©1995-2024 sales.org™

**A Review of Assessment Results
and Job Performances
[1998 • 2005 Implementations]**

PREPARED FOR
McGill University HRD Study Review for Chapter 3: Assignment 1a (Page 71)
Managing Performance through Training & Development (ISBN 978-0176166489)
Monica Belcourt, PhD / Philip C. Wright, PhD / Alan M Saks, PhD
Nelson, Thomson Learning



1998 • 2005 Sample Report on Findings and Recommendations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

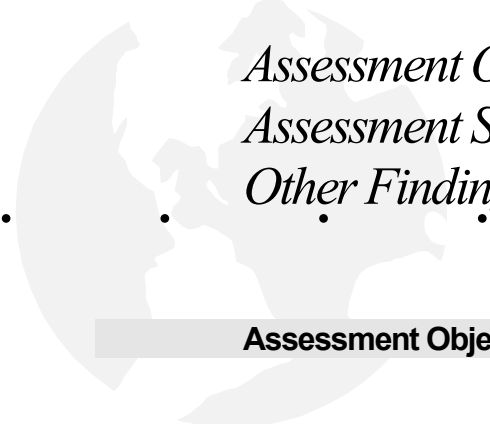


SECTION TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
TABLE OF CONTENTS	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii
Assessment Categories and Result Comparisons	1
Relationship of Skills & Capabilities to Psychometric Results	7
Skills & Capabilities Assessments Findings	8
Skills & Capabilities Assessments Recommendations	10
Appendices	
➤ INDEX	14
➤ Skills & Capabilities Assessments - Design Methodology & Construct Validation	15
➤ Skills & Capabilities Assessments - Sample Performance Charts	17
➤ Five Levels of Learning - Canadian HR Reporter Article	19
➤ Training for Competency vs. Training for Knowledge - Canadian HR Reporter Article	21
➤ Three ³ Learning Matrix	23
➤ Sample Report - Management Skills & Capabilities Assessment	24



1998 • 2005 Sample Report on Findings and Recommendations

Executive Summary



Assessment Objectives, Comparison of Assessment Scores to Performance Results, & Other Findings

• • • • • • • • • •

Assessment Objectives

These Skills & Capabilities Assessments were created to support the recruiting selection, development and alignment of best practices personnel to roles and responsibilities.

The primary objectives of Skills & Capabilities Assessments are to sample, measure, and report on strengths, identify gaps in knowledge and judgments, and to evaluate the level of job related complex competencies that each individual demonstrates. This assists and enables Managers in putting the best people into the right roles with the necessary competency to meet and fulfil client needs and goals.

A secondary objective for the Skills & Capabilities Assessments is to measure and identify both individual and organizational learning opportunities that can be quickly and directly applied to both actions and performance results. This process helps to increase the ROI on training investments.

A third objective of the Skills & Capabilities Assessments is to measure the overall competency of both new hires and employees leaving the role, to measure the effectiveness of recruiting and retention of top performers. This helps to support and increase both the ROI and ROE of corporate intellectual capital.

Finally, Skills & Capabilities Assessments are intended to provide additional support for ongoing identification, creation, and implementation of programs specifically designed to improve sales performance development for both individuals and the organization.

Comparison of Overall Skills & Capabilities to Job Performance

Linking Assessment Scores to Business Results

Perhaps the most essential question for this report to answer is what relationship individual Assessment scores have to real performance results. Because this question is at the heart of the value, credibility and usability of the Assessment conclusions, we have chosen to open this report with review of those findings:

Skills & Capabilities	Performance Averages				
	To Plan	Incentives	Complaints	Profitability	Quality
[Overall Averages]					
• Top Quartile	111%	112%	20%	99.4%	99.5%
• 2 nd Quartile	96%	109%	16%	97.8%	98.9%
• 3 rd Quartile	93%	93%	43%	99.4%	91.7%
• 4 th Quartile	95%	87%	21%	98.4%	97.8%

Table 1

The following table shows the relationship between scores and personnel retention.

Skills & Capabilities	Transfers & Terminations		
	Left Firm	Changed Positions	TOTAL
[Overall Result]			
• Top Quartile	38.5%	61.5%	100%
• 2 nd Quartile	34.6%	65.4%	100%
• 3 rd Quartile	27.8%	72.2%	100%
• 4 th Quartile	28.6%	71.4%	100%

Table 2

- 63% of those who left scored in the top two Quartiles on Skills & Capabilities
- 57% of people who left their roles scored in the top two Quartiles on Skills & Capabilities
- 72% of people who left the role with scores in the bottom two Quartile were retained

NOTE:

These numbers represent a consolidation of data from several firms. For the purpose of both confidentiality and consistency, dollar figures and specific definitions of performance measurements have been reported in generic terms.

Assessment Categories and Comparisons of Results

Measuring & Managing the Right Skills & Capabilities

Communication, Sales, & Relationship Building Skills

The original Skills & Capabilities Assessments were developed to sample and evaluate the negotiating and influencing (Relationship Selling) skills of professionals and salespeople. Before reviewing the categories and sub-categories of skills being measured, the following table provides a comparison between results across sample segments on those common influencing skills:

Skills & Capabilities CATEGORY	Assessment Averages					
	CREDIT UNIONS	BANKING	INSURANCE	U.S. GOV'T	HRD STUDENTS	GEN. POP
• Listening	42.0%	41.7%	45.1%	42.1%	41.6%	48.3%
• Questioning	49.2%	48.4%	58.5%	53.0%	55.7%	55.4%
• Relationship Selling	47.9%	46.7%	53.8%	48.9%	49.2%	59.1%
• Overall [SOFT SKILLS]	46.3%	45.6%	52.5%	48.0%	48.9%	54.3%

Table 2

FINDINGS

- Skills & Capabilities Assessments score the same gaps in core listening and questioning skills that are reported in Industry Benchmarking reports and Customer Satisfaction surveys
- Sales and negotiating training (generally) results in a negative impact on performance. The General Population sample averages approximately 0.3 sales or negotiating training programs, the U.S. Government averaged 1.1 (primarily winning negotiating strategies) , and the insurance industry had a 1.4 average. The banking industry averaged 3.6 sales and negotiating programs over the past ten years, well above that of other sample groups
- None of the sales and negotiating training programs reported and reviewed incorporate skill and competency development of the fundamentals of communication or decision making principles - concentrating instead on processes and techniques to lead customers to desired outcomes.

CONCLUSION

New and additional emphasis on core communication and influencing skills is required.

LISTENING

PARTICIPATIVE

- Actively acknowledging the speaker
- Supporting and encouraging the speaker
- Making the best possible use of appropriate posture, gestures, and expressions to confirm interest and involvement in discussions

SITUATIONAL

- Identifying information based the context it is presented in
- Recognizing when information is being presented in either a positive or negative context to influence the listener's judgment
- Differentiating and discerning meaning in messages involving nuance or ambiguity
- Validating the relevance of the information to the topic of discussion
- Sensitivity to social, cultural, and situational factors

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Understanding and managing the influence of other listeners in a group setting
- Minimizing the effects of noise and factors of location to improve concentration

NON-VERBAL

- Ability to recognize and interpret the non-verbal clues and cues that add to the effective meaning of the speaker
- Ability, in a socially and culturally acceptable manner, to use non-verbal clues and cues as a participative listener

FINDINGS

Some of the more common and consistent gaps, issues, and opportunities for improving Listening Skills come from the following areas:

- Overconfidence in listening abilities is prevalent in all samples. This is particularly true with individuals who scored in the bottom two Quartiles. It is also true for the majority of Managers tested at the same time. Overconfidence is a proven barrier to both performance and to learning effectiveness.
- One of the more prevalent, and disconcerting problems identified is the assumption of superior knowledge and understanding and the importance of interrupting or controlling content being presented by others
- Awareness of the influence that personal experience and bias have in interpreting and understanding while listening are substantially lower in the banking sample than in all other groups
- The banking sample demonstrated one of the lowest scores for areas involved in understanding and avoiding listening behaviors that can negatively influence the listener's presentation, understanding and judgment

CONCLUSION

Listening (comprehension) is a foundation skill, required to support questioning, presenting, and decision activities. The problems identified above are compounded by a variety of techniques and habits that have been introduced that may encourage the use of assumptions and superior knowledge to (unduly) direct and control discussions, including those related to needs analysis and fact finding. While most industry sample scores are low, scores for the general population are higher indicating that the public will more readily recognize and react to poor listening behaviours. Obvious problem in building relationships with clients, this also places the tested individuals at a substantial disadvantage in discussions and negotiations in competitive situations.

QUESTIONING

This category measures a number of skills that impact the effectiveness of questioning. These include methodologies provided in Bloom's Taxonomy of Questioning. The following is an overview that captures a number of these questioning elements, what those elements examine, and examples:

KNOWLEDGE

- remembering
- memorizing
- recognizing
- recalling identification
- recall of information
 - Who, what, when, where, how ...?
 - Describe...?

COMPREHENSION

- interpreting
- translating from one medium to another
- describing in one's own words
- organization and selection of facts and ideas
 - Retell...?

APPLICATION

- problem solving
- applying information to produce some result
- use of facts, rules and principles
 - How is...an example of...?
 - How is...related to...?
 - Why is...significant?

ANALYSIS

- subdividing something to show how it is put together
- finding the underlying structure of a communication
- identifying motives
- separation of a whole into component parts
 - What are the parts or features of...?
 - Classify...according to... ?
 - Outline/diagram... ?
 - How does...compare/contrast with...?
 - What evidence can you list for...?

This first group of descriptions represents the more common, basic, and less impactful questioning approaches. While better than not asking, these questions are not generally effective at eliciting responses that include either emotional or intellectual commitment and interest.

FINDINGS

Predominantly most samples of Questioning Skills fell into the first two sub-categories, Knowledge and Comprehension. See the next page for further details, findings, and Conclusions.

QUESTIONING (CONTINUED)

Of greater value and importance are the understanding, application, and regular use of more advanced skills that elicit situational, personal, and other essential decision-making information.

SYNTHESIS

- creating a unique, original product that may be in verbal form or may be a physical object
- combination of ideas to form a new whole
 - What would you predict/infer from...?
 - What ideas can you add to...?
 - How would you create/design a new...?
 - What might happen if you combined...?
 - What solutions would you suggest for...?

EVALUATION

- making value decisions about issues
- resolving controversies or differences of opinion
- development of opinions, judgements or decisions
 - Do you agree...?
 - What do you think about...?
 - What is the most important...?
 - Place the following in order of priority...
 - How would you decide about...?
 - What criteria would you use to assess...?

PREPARATION

In addition to Bloom's methods and descriptions, The Assessment reviews the following aspects of questioning skills of the participants:

- Planning and organizing questions in the most effective order
- Scripting, practicing and refining questions [including Open vs. Limited probing]
- Anticipation and analysis of related and secondary considerations
- Adaptability and flexibility in responding to unexpected responses and circumstances

FINDINGS

Some of the more common and consistent gaps, issues, and opportunities for improving Questioning Skills for training & development come from the following areas:

- The full range of questioning skills in these samples are weak
- There are significant gaps in planning, organizing, preparation and scripting
- There is confusion over the difference between questions, objections and complaints, and a clear gap on the essential actions and processes necessary to resolve each from the client perspective

CONCLUSION

There are significant learning needs and opportunities in training and coaching efforts to build questioning competencies in order to increase capabilities across all communication and influencing skills category.

The most significant gaps between the industry samples and best practices come from the 'Preparation' subset of skills, with very low performances under planning and preparation, and even lower scores related to questioning around assumptions. Even those whose scores were in the top Quartile provided responses to the assessment that suggest there is a greater focus on questioning to achieve a predetermined objective than on answers necessary to support the analytical and exploratory approach to needs analysis and fulfillment.

RELATIONSHIP SELLING [TRUST BUILDING]

The category of Relationship Selling reviews a variety of communication, judgment, and professional advisor skills and capabilities including:

- Recognizing and providing advice professionally
- "Client needs" vs. "Client ask" focus for advice — ensuring the advice represents what is in the client's best interests
- Confidently determining and providing advice beyond simple order taking and/or selling of product
- Appropriately recognizing, applying, and balancing personal experiences and biases to ensure that the clients needs are met in the most effective manner
- Understanding of the feelings, factors, and priorities involved in the client's decision making process
- Recognizing and responding to client issues, needs and priorities
- Knowledge of, and ability to work within, industry, company, and regulatory limits on the range of financial advice that the can be offered as solutions to meet the client's needs
- Recognizing and guiding clients through the process of full disclosure [risk/result] to facilitate the achievement of unequivocal informed consent.
- Confidence in the business, the industry, and the professional practices of others

These are the influencing and interpersonal judgments and decisions that help to build and sustain long term relationships that are built on mutual benefits and best interests.

FINDINGS

Some of the more common and consistent gaps, issues, and opportunities for improving Relationship Selling and Trust Building competencies come from the following areas:

- There is a predisposition for recognizing and acting on perceived business needs and priorities ahead of, and in some cases instead of, concentrating on providing clients with solutions to their problems, needs & goals
- There are gaps in demonstrating understanding of the buyer decision process, both applied and experience-based
- Lower than average ability was measured on situations demonstrating respect, support, and constructive encouragement across all the soft skills areas, all of which impact client and employee satisfaction and retention
- There are gaps in understanding, and appropriate application, of personal experience, expertise, and biasing in the role of a professional advisor

CONCLUSION

There is a demonstrated need across the industry segments to unlearn techniques, processes, and assumptions that are negatively affecting current relationship selling judgments and actions.

Specific training on critical decision-making factors and skills will help individuals provide clients with a higher degree of confidence in recommendations made, increase the individual's own decision effectiveness, and help lead to improvements in customer satisfaction, retention, and extension of existing client relationships.

Relationship of Skills & Capabilities to Psychometrics

Comparing Attributes and Competencies

While testing is limited in the ability to predict the circumstances, efforts, and results for individuals, tests themselves can identify characteristics and traits that are common among top (and bottom) performers. This information can be useful in a number of ways, including the use of test results to drive new and enhanced learning efforts, and to integrate the findings from tests into the hiring process. The following table provides an insight into some of the common attributes of top performers found in one client implementation:

Skills & Capabilities	Psychometric ¹ Averages			
	BD ²	AP ²	SS ²	SALES FIT ²
[OVERALL SCORE]				
• 1 st Quartile [> 57.50%]	83.87	0.53	42.20	75.55
• 2 nd Quartile [> 53.25%]	85.01	0.86	40.53	76.61
• 3 rd Quartile [> 49.50%]	80.48	1.02	33.54	70.97
• 4 th Quartile [< 49.50%]	75.21	-1.82	32.49	65.99

Table 4

We know from our original comparison of Skills and Capabilities scores to performance results, the Top and 2nd Quartile groups substantially outperformed those scoring in the bottom two Quartiles in both performance '*To Plan*' and '*Incentives*' averages. Using that information, and the comparisons above, top performers average in the following range of scores:

Skills & Capabilities	Psychometric ¹ Averages			
	BD ²	AP ²	SS ²	SALES FIT ²
[AVERAGE OVERALL SCORE]				
• 1 st & 2 nd Quartiles [58.43%]	84.41	0.73	41.33	76.07
• 3 rd & 4 th Quartiles [47.74%]	78.11	-0.33	33.09	68.72

Table 5

FINDINGS

There are direct and significant relationships between Skills & Capabilities Assessment, attributes, and performance results.

CONCLUSION

- New and renewed emphasis should be given to developing overall Skills & Capabilities (Competencies)
- Performance is highest when there is the combination of stronger Skills & Capabilities scores with higher AP² and SS²

¹ From Sales Pro® — property of Self Management Group, Toronto, Ontario

² BD [Business Development]; AP [Achievement Potential]; SS [Systems & Structure]; SF [Sales Fit]

Skills & Capabilities Assessments Findings

Key Learnings

The initial listing below reviews several key findings, including some already presented:

- Skills & Capabilities Assessments results are predictive the job performance of the individuals tested in workforce samples.
- Overall performance on communication and selling skills varies widely between organizations in financial services, general business, industry and government, with even best practice companies lagging behind general population performances
- Low computation skills* have been directly linked to poor [and costly] rewrite requirements on accreditation programs, and to poor business quality experience

This section also presents findings that extend beyond the individual Skills & Capabilities categories, identifying systemic and organizational opportunities and issues related to the results of the Assessments:

ADDITIONAL LEARNINGS

IMPACT OF SALES TRAINING ON ASSESSMENT SCORES & PERFORMANCE RESULTS

With most training on selling skills, there is an immediate and measurable improvement in sales performance. In many instances clients have reported performance decreases in the longer term following sales training interventions. This correlates to our findings on the impact on competency results for individuals who have completed sales training:

SALES TRAINING PROGRAMS	Skills & Capabilities Averages			
	LISTENING	QUESTIONING	REL'N SELLING	OVERALL
• 1 or none	47.7%	54.5%	57.9%	53.2%
• 2 or more	44.1%	55.3%	51.6%	50.3%

Table 6

ISSUES

Norm Trainor, author of 'Eight Best Practices of High Performing Salespeople' is often quoted: 'Over more than 25 years in the training and development business, what I've learned is that training by itself doesn't work.'

CONCLUSION

Sales training programs that are directed at development and improvement of core skills provide better long term performance improvements, with little or no apparent reduction in immediate results. Those programs that concentrate on techniques, tool-kits, and tips generally produce immediate performance improvements, but at a cost to overall competency and long term results.

* Computation Questions are not included in the Professional Selling Skills & Capabilities Assessment.

RELATIONSHIP TO JUDGMENT & DECISION-MAKING COMPETENCIES

There are a substantial number of variables that impact individual competency and effectiveness in judgment, decision-making, and actions. The Skills & Capabilities Assessments have been designed to test and measure a number of the more common and critical factors that effect these competencies, finding specific business opportunities for improvement in the following areas:

- **Representativeness** —refers to the capability individuals demonstrate to effectively and accurately compare various factors and their relative importance to the decisions. Two key areas where the scores in this sample represent risks and limits on decision accuracy and effectiveness include:
 - Estimation - the ability to estimate numbers and values presented in differing terms
 - Compound calculations - the ability to perform compound calculations required to compare alternatives in more complex decisions
- **Availability** —refers to how 'top of mind' key, and often critical, facts, factors and information are when the individual is asked to make a decision. This is of particular importance when dealing with decisions that may involve more than one area of expertise, such as integrating an offer combining a credit and investment offer with an understanding of the tax and risk implications. The two most apparent easily remedied gaps identified in this sample study are:
 - Recency of training - individuals are more inclined to recall information that has been recently taught, updated, or reviewed. Gaps in consumer credit scores relative to credit principles are an example of knowledge that had diminished in recognition, awareness and importance largely due to a lack of ongoing reinforcement of the learning.
 - Access to reference materials - Criterion Reference studies show that individuals are better able to recall and consider information, even very complex concepts, if the information is readily available through a common source. Efforts on advancing corporate Intranet, creation of knowledge libraries, improvement in cataloguing and providing access to technical information and memos can help in overall job performance. It is essential to continue and extend the use of reference sources and regular updates to ensure that 'availability' of key information is increased across the organization.
- **Risk / Result analysis** — prioritizing, optimizing, risk management and related judgments
 - Values & Principles - learning, judgment, and decision-making behaviours and effectiveness are governed by an individual's recognition of, and commitment to, values and principles. In many cases a judgment is easily made because it doesn't conflict with any beliefs. It is in the more complex situations where judgment can become clouded by (apparently) conflicting values and beliefs, requiring the individual to establish priorities and identify how each option will impact those principles and the individual objectives.
 - "Given only a choice between two paths, all must choose" Anon.
 - In this sample, the conflicts and inconsistencies in judgment and decisions occurred most often when the individual is faced with options between a business focus, a financial focus, a personal focus, and/or a client focus. The need for clearer understanding of the risks and priorities of those types of decisions, as well as additional understanding of external considerations, such as market conditions is important to long-term success.
 - Complexity - recognizing and integrating solutions is an essential component to the role of a professional salesperson. With this understanding, it is not surprising that the salespeople and managers with the strongest skills & capabilities substantially outperformed those in these studies with more narrow and limited competencies.

One additional element of Risk / Result analysis of the business relates to the retention of existing business. Meeting wider product and service needs of existing customers helps to make it less likely, important or convenient for them to seek or accept solutions offered by competitors.

Skills & Capabilities Assessments Recommendations

Finding, Training, Developing and Retaining Top Performers

As with most complex systems and puzzles, it is important to start at the beginning in order to put all the elements together in the right order to complete the picture. The starting point for Skills & Capabilities within an organization is at the point of hiring.

HIRE POWER

As a direct result of the findings in these studies, sales.org™ has established a hiring manager package 'Hire Power' that can be used to incorporate both a Basic Skills & Capabilities Assessment and psychometric assessment tools to support managers in making more informed and effective hiring decisions.

ISSUES

Manager performances on the Skills & Capabilities Assessments shows that this group generally scores only slightly better than the salespeople sampled in any of the skills categories, which means hiring managers face several significant challenges and problems:

- Managers are being asked to recognize and hire individuals whose core interviewing skills are, in most cases, substantially better than those of the Hiring Manager
- A significant percentage of Managers demonstrate overconfidence, and a reluctance to recognize and accept any personal learning needs and gaps in their Listening and Questioning Skills
- Many Managers continue to believe that they do not need, or want, more effective and consistent hiring tools and processes

CONCLUSION

- Continued training and emphasis on the recruiting and selection programs, with strong accountability of Hiring Managers and their managers is essential if the best candidates are to be recruited, selected and retained.
- Early implementation of better hiring programs can ensure that the benefits of these programs are achieved more quickly, and will help to reduce the number of less effective hires made by the organizations in this sample
[average costs est. >\$10,000/year to cover attrition, terminations, advancements, etc.]

ORIENTATION & INITIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS

The range of Assessment Scores, and the range of job performance measurements, shows there are substantial differences in skills, capabilities, and judgments. This is a primary cause for reports (Customer Satisfaction Surveys, Industry Benchmarking, Media & News) of inconsistent advice, service quality and customer experiences. Many top organizations have rigorous orientation and training programs designed to provide each contributor with a foundation of common principles, skills, practices, and processes to ensure that there is the necessary due diligence and duty of care by all contributors. This rigorous approach also supports the professional standard of facilitating the unequivocal informed consent of clients.

ISSUES

- Organizations have found significant, and in many cases growing, deficiencies in critical core communication and influencing skills. A review of current sales training programs on the market today continues to show omissions and/or inconsistencies in providing the necessary learning content and design to overcome many of these deficiencies in skills, capabilities, and competencies.
- Learning events are staged to suit the launch of new products or corporate initiatives, independently and without consistency in either methods or processes. This is particularly evident in Financial Services, where the approach to Financial Advice is separated for Investment Planning, Lending, Commercial Banking or Insurance products and services.
- Managers are often unfamiliar and untrained in both the use and the coaching requirements to support effective use of products, services, software, systems and tools essential to the success and effectiveness of financial advisors.
- Both new hires and existing personnel in most companies report a lack of training, support and effective coaching on critical skills, forms, procedures and systems.
- Peer coaching and mentoring activities is a desired and effective tool for Best Practices organizations, but is infrequently and ineffectively utilized in the most environments. In many firms, these activities are neither allocated based on the competency and ability of a trained and supported peer coach or mentor, nor are they directed and enabled through any formal process of training and development of designated peer coaches and mentors. As a result, in many cases, peer coaches with poor scores on both the Skills & Capabilities and performance reports, have been designated to coach and develop new hires and others within their area.

CONCLUSION

Many companies have a need and opportunity to create and implement more comprehensive orientation and core competency learning programs.

Salespeople — For both existing and new personnel — training, testing and certification of core competencies including:

- Business Principles, Values and Practices
- Personal learning skills & note-taking capabilities
- Selling, negotiating, influencing and decision making skills, behaviours processes and techniques
- Comprehensive training on core products, services, forms, procedures, tools & systems
- Practical training and testing of consistent, standard Advice & Selling Principles and practices
- In the field Job Shadowing, Coaching and Mentoring programs prior to assumption of client responsibilities [as well as ongoing once actively in the role].

Managers — For both existing and new managers and executives — training, testing and certification of core management competencies including:

- Participation, as group team leaders, in an initial orientation and core competency training program of Salespeople — providing the manager with a direct, hands-on and practical understanding of the Salesperson's responsibilities and accountabilities and the role of the manager in supporting those efforts and successes.

GROWTH & SUSTAINMENT • Career Advancement & Remedial Learning Initiatives

Best practices organizations with the need to attract, select, train and retain highly skilled individuals, recognize the need for ongoing learning and development programs for their people. This is a particularly important critical success factor for organizations where the business, markets, and skill requirements are in a state of continuous change. In the global marketplace this has never been more important than it is today. New markets and competitors are entering the field, regulatory boundaries and considerations are under constant review, client needs, knowledge and levels of sophistication are becoming more complex, and the level of qualification and accreditation of professional advisors are rising just as rapidly and continuously, simply to keep pace. In this environment, maintaining market share and profitability is difficult enough. Growing market shares, and capturing new markets, requires an organization whose passion for continuous learning and growth is shared by and with, every employee and business partner.

ISSUES

- Careers are far less defined and more difficult to predict today than at any time in the relatively short history of banking and other financial intermediaries
- New training initiatives on products, services, and tools continue to be driven by, and delivered as, independent events. This has created a number of issues:
 - Inconsistent learning design methodologies
 - the programs reviewed in connection with the areas of skills & capabilities measured in this report can generally be categorized as single cognitive design disciplines such as Inference Schema, Neuro Linguistic Programming, Criterion Referencing, Modeling, Operant Conditioning, Outcome Expectancy, Pattern Recognition, etc.
 - the programs often exclude construct reference to the business values and principles and the relationship between learning objectives and those key performance drivers
 - programs rarely provide integration of learning with other key accountabilities of the learning audience. For example, with the exception of compliance factors, there is generally little or no integrated planning support for cross-selling. The same is true for integration of upselling and referral program needs. Top quartile salespeople **have** demonstrated stronger integrated competencies and have translated that into better fulfillment of both client needs and achievement of business goals
 - Net New vs. All New training
 - two common and consistent complaints from program participants are that there is either too much new information presented for the time allowed, or that there was not enough new information presented to justify the time and investment in attending the program
 - there is no formal, tracked, or mandated programs for learning specific for identifying the need, or delivering programs designed to address remedial learning needs and opportunities. This continues to be the case across most technical skills areas
 - coaching and mentoring programs are rarely included in the design, delivery or support of new training programs, and when included, coaching and mentoring programs are inconsistent, and generally exclude the necessary metrics for tracking, managing, and improving specific actions, decisions and behaviours based on business performance

- Accountability — learning is generally delivered to the target audience [salespeople], announced to their managers, and overlooked in the performance measurement and management accountabilities that will be expected of managers and other executives. This is likely the result of a number of factors:
 - ❑ Inconsistent and inadequate coaching, management and reporting support tools to allow for the addition and integration of extended management accountabilities
 - ❑ Inconsistent and conflicting design priorities focused on delivery of learning programs as opposed to achievement of business goals. Designers and developers jobs and accountabilities almost always end on completion of the first delivery of the program, so that their success is based on building the program, not on building the business
 - ❑ Fear. In our discussions with a number of learning designers, product groups, and business partners, there is a somewhat justified fear that both the learning initiative and individual careers will be challenged and risked if the designers include new and higher standards and expectations of the supporting managers. In short, the goal becomes creation and delivery of a program that is orphaned on completion, only the salesperson and client own the program, everyone else is safely distanced from accountability and responsibility for ensuring the survival and success of the initiative.

CONCLUSION

Salespeople in General

- continue the work on, and success of the current career path programs. Ensure that individuals are able to make full use of the professional development and learning opportunities required to maintain and build on the current capabilities, as well as access to the programs necessary for advancement into new and more senior roles over time.
- Standardize and integrate all learning programs to ensure that new learning builds on past learning, and that all learning reinforces and grows the total range of skills and capabilities of the participants
- Use every training program as an opportunity to reinforce and reaffirm the values and vision of the organization, building greater consistency in purpose, practice and job performance with each new training event
- Include learning support tools and training as elements in all learning initiatives
- Ensure that all programs include reference and training on how the net new learning fits within the larger picture of individual responsibilities and accountabilities, as well as how the particular program complements and enhances the customer's total experience
- Develop new training programs to allow for effective and practical delivery to all the potential audience [see Appendices for model of the Three³ Learning Matrix]
- Create and implement testing, measurement, and support of Relearning programs to support all contributors in the continuous improvement and review of critical skills & Capabilities [Annual Spring Training Camps, Quarterly Skills Drills Workshops, etc.]

Managers, and Executives

- Formalize coaching and mentoring skills, capabilities, behaviours, processes, and accountabilities
- Integrate leadership training on new programs with those of the advisor to ensure that everyone in the process understands and is supported in the successful activation of new and improved skills required to achieve program and business goals
- Involve key business partners, managers and executives from the beginning in the design of programs to ensure there is ongoing ownership, accountabilities, and sustainment pieces incorporated in new learning and performance initiatives.

1998 • 2005 Sample Report on Findings and Recommendations

APPENDICES



INDEX	PAGE NUMBER
Appendices	14
➤ Skills & Capabilities Assessments - Design Methodology & Construct Validation	15
➤ Skills & Capabilities Assessments - Sample Performance Charts	17
➤ Five Levels of Learning - Canadian HR Reporter Article	19
➤ Training for Competency vs. Training for Knowledge - Canadian HR Reporter Article	21
➤ Three ³ Learning Matrix	23
➤ Sample Report - Management Skills & Capabilities Assessment	24



Construct Validation & Design Methodology

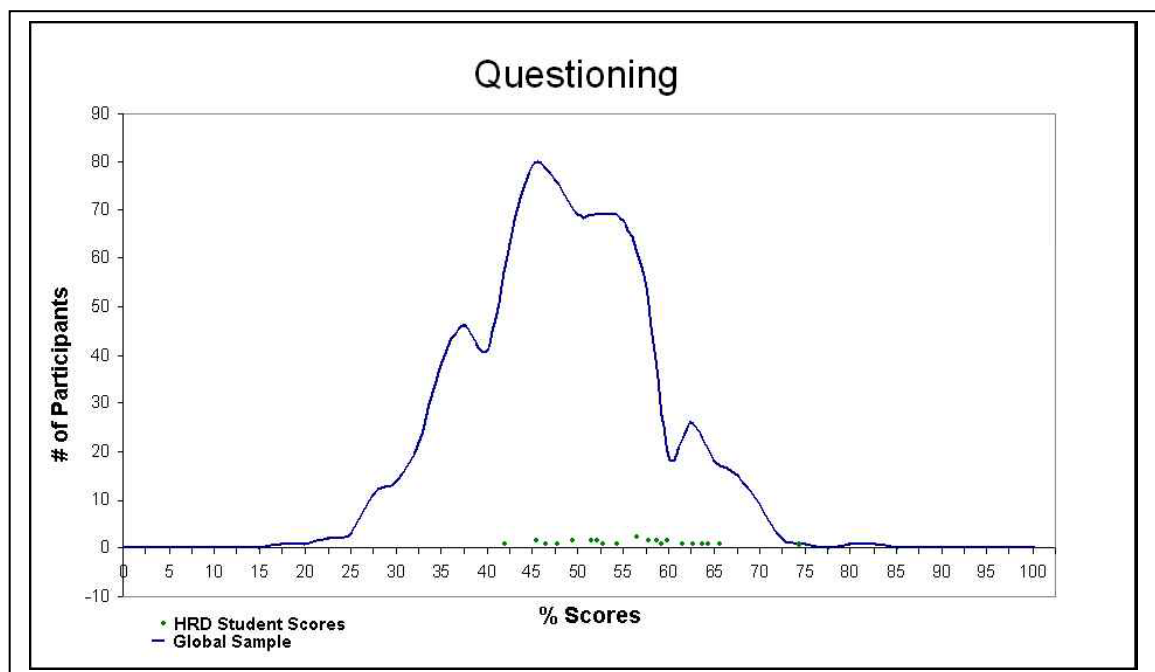
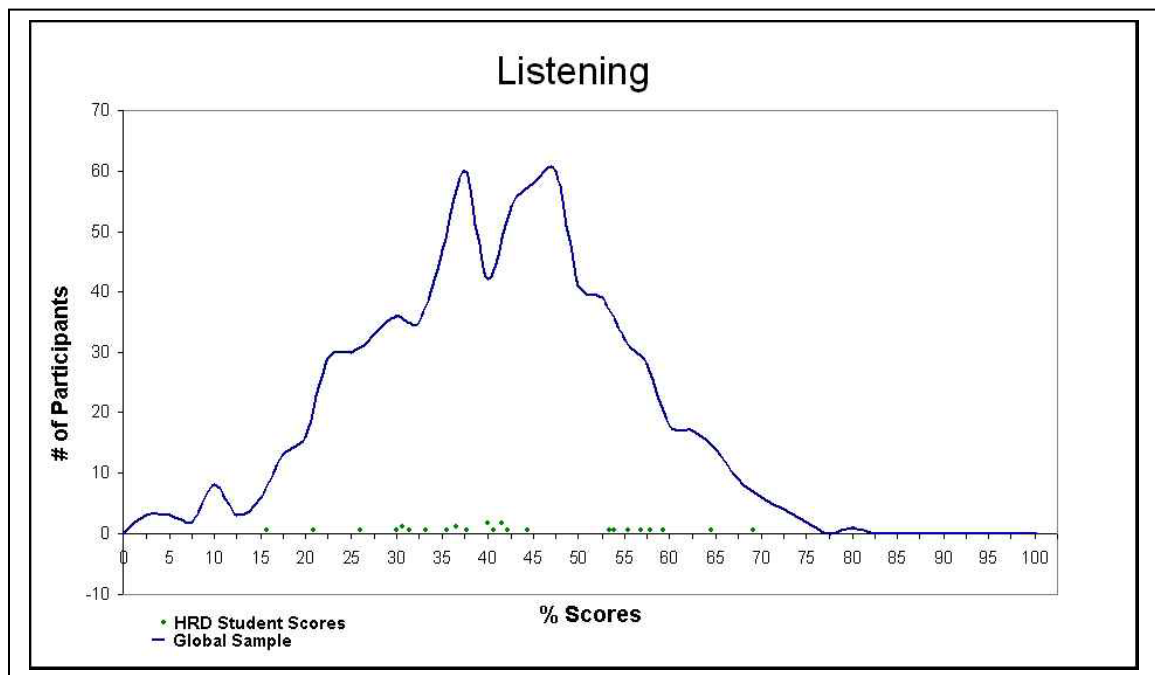
- Assessment questions provide the necessary information to provide the right referral, first time, by ensuring that the referral goes to the individual with the specific key job related judgments, responsibilities and skills required by that customer. This is done, in part, by determining the probability of each referral resulting in one or more of the following outcomes:
 - add new business, customers or partners
 - increase profitability [costs/revenues]
 - place the customer or partner at risk
 - meet or compromise legal, compliance, regulatory, industry, or market requirements
 - lose customers, partners, or influence business retention
 - place the company/individual at risk
 - add value to the customer or partner relationship
- Questions on specialized roles focus on identifying the **general** competency and fiduciary considerations related to the role.
- The construction of questions will review several specific factors that determine the level of expertise, accreditation, and service necessary to meet the client's needs. In order to minimize the number of questions, and maximize the accuracy of the referral, our approach uses Analysis and Synthesis level questions [see 'Bloom's Taxonomy of Questioning' attached] to properly confirm the participant's knowledge and understanding of the issues being asked. These can include, but are not limited to:

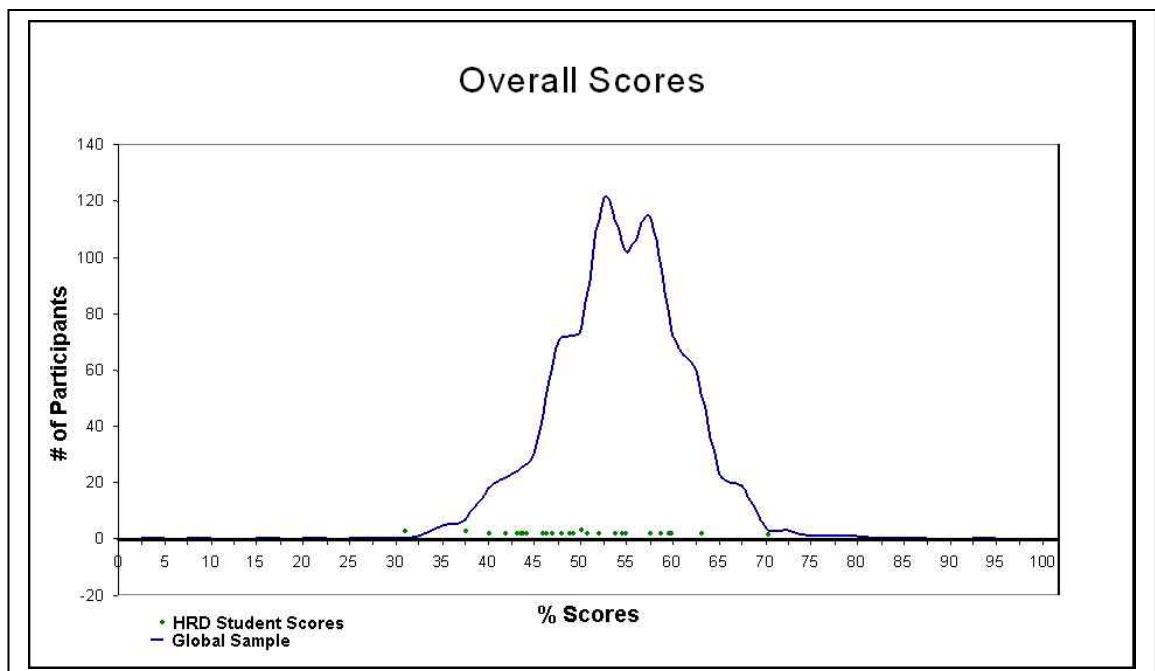
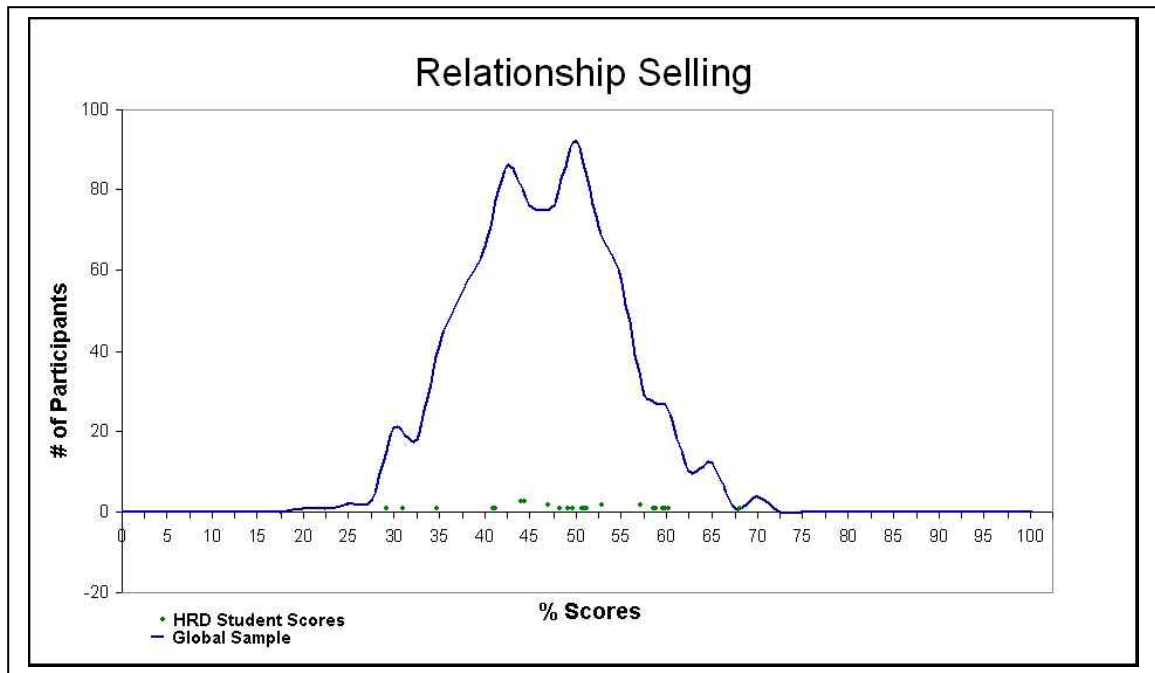
CATEGORY	# OF QUESTIONS (EST.)
• Listening	35
• Questioning	30
• Relationship Selling	30
- Complex questions are used to determine “how full” each response is, a critical variable in differentiating between entry level and advanced levels of competency. Complex questions may present a series of situations with alternatives that may have more than one correct answer where each is correct to differing levels, each may be equally correct, there may be only one correct alternative, or where none of the alternatives is correct. “Representativeness” and “Availability” are among the heuristics of competency evaluations this enables.
- Using another testing technique, over half the questions in our assessments are generally developed to assess two or more categories in combination, modeling these on the reality that client's needs and decisions are complex and interdependent, not discrete and independent. This approach again helps to differentiate the overall “level” of sophistication that can be measured against the complexity of entry level and advanced investment competencies. The result of this design are assessments that provide as many as 200 discrete measurements, across 3 or more categories.
- All sales.org™ Assessments incorporate and test against a broad range of Learning, Decision Making, and related Cognitive Skills, Disciplines and Models [Listed on Page 2].
- The Assessments follow sales.org's "Five Levels of Competency" measurements, for results that identify strengths and opportunities applying Processes, Skills, Principles, Behaviours, Processes, or Techniques. Featured in "Best Practices: Training and Development" [Carswell, 2000]
See also Page 19 — "Five levels of competency" article [Canadian HR Reporter, March 10, 1997]

Learning, Decision and related Cognitive Skills, Disciplines and Models:

In developing our programs, **sales.org™** creates materials and questions developed to identify or establish varying levels of knowledge, analytical, evaluative and interpretive skills and capabilities. These also extend into assessment of lateral thinking, experiential, and intuitive skills, evidenced through techniques to indicate advanced skills and competencies. Where possible we also integrate and test the overall integrity of our assessments against a variety of current andragogical (adult learning), decision-making, and related cognitive disciplines and models. These include, but are not limited to, considerations found with-in works on the following:

- ACT (declarative, procedural and working memory).
- Algo Heuristic.
- Anchored Instruction.
- Associative Learning.
- Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Cognitive Dissonance.
- Component Display.
- Connectionism.
- Contiguity.
- Criterion Reference.
- Drive Reduction.
- Elaboration.
- Experiential.
- Genetic Epistemology.
- GOMS (Goals; Operators; Methods; Selection).
- Heuristics.
- Inference Schema.
- Information Pickup.
- Mathematical Learning.
- Mental Models.
- Mimicry.
- Modelling.
- Multiple Intelligences.
- Operant Conditioning.
- Pattern Recognition.
- Phenomenology
- Scrip.
- Sign.
- Soar.
- Social Cognitive (Social Learning).
- Structural Learning.
- Subsumption.
- Triarchic.
- Two-sided Mind
- Adult Learning.
- Andragogy/Andragogy.
- Aptitude Treatment Interaction.
- Behaviourism.
- Characteristics of Adult Learners.
- Cognitive Flexibility.
- Conditional Learning.
- Constructivist.
- Conversation.
- Double Loop Learning.
- Dual Coding.
- Environments.
- Functional Context.
- Gestalt.
- General Problem Solver.
- Individualized Learning.
- Information Mapping.
- Information Processing.
- Mathematical Problem Solving.
- Metalinguistics.
- Minimalism.
- Modes of Learning.
- Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP).
- Originality.
- Phenomenonography.
- Repair.
- Self-Efficacy.
- Situated Learning.
- Social Development.
- Stimulus Sampling.
- Structure of Intellect.
- Symbol Systems.
- Triune Brain
- Vicarious Learning





5. Techniques

Techniques are the advanced behaviours, tools and capabilities that experienced individuals can use to improve their performance and results. This is the Level at which Competency must be tested. Novices will generally show only a limited ability to achieve more complex results, while masters demonstrate the ability to accomplish seemingly impossible objectives.

Apprentice mechanics learn the basics about machinery and tools. They become familiar over time with which tool is used for a given need, and what are the essentials for completing a specific task. A master mechanic knows and understands these basic essentials, but through experience with different machines, problems and more specialized tools, will demonstrate the competency to think beyond the apparent facts.

If faced with the need to repair some-

thing unfamiliar, without the right tools or parts, an apprentice cannot be expected to have the experience, nor the understanding, to succeed. A master mechanic will use knowledge and experience to consider alternative tools, approaches or materials. Both may be capable mechanics, but the master mechanic, with a knowledge of alternative and advanced techniques, clearly has the higher competency.

Each of the Five Levels of Learning must be addressed in developing competency models. It is easy to overlook one of the Levels. For the last few years we have been working with a client to develop competency models for each position in the organization. The first competency models did not adequately address Principles. As a result of the senior management team defining the principles of the organization, the competency models began to reflect these principles.

From a development perspective, the goal of competency modeling is to expand training programs to include an entire suite of principles, skills, behaviours, processes and techniques. This provides the opportunity to continuously improve and modify learning materials as knowledge, experience and technology allow, ensuring programs are pre-designed to evolve in concert with learning needs.

Norman L. Trainor is a principal in The Covenant Group, a Toronto-based consulting company specializing in individual, team, organizational and customer learning

This article first appeared in the
March 10th, 1998

HR Reporter CANADIAN

Reprinted with permission.

For more information on this article and on the use of Skills & Capabilities Assessments, contact:



IMPROVING TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS

Training for Knowledge ≠ Training for Competency

As an active member in the training industry for more than 20 years, I have learned one of the most important lessons for an educator to understand... training doesn't work. To a growing extent, business has been learning this lesson as well, usually after a large expense of time, effort and money. Occasionally, as in this article, a successful business recognizes that improving their performance demands programs that go beyond the simple and traditional training approach of lesson plans, lectures, binders, textbook and tests.

I have already reported on the success my colleague Geoff Davidson of sales.org has had with an innovative approach to developing competency and performance learning for the workplace. This article will focus on some of the details and results that have been accomplished by applying this approach.

In November of 1996 Geoff was approached by Stoney Kudel and Steve Brent, Learning Consultants with the CIBC Investment Specialist Group, and asked to assess the design, delivery, and effectiveness of their development program for new Investment Specialists. Geoff observed, "At that time this group of financial advisors was already considered the benchmark that many in the financial services industry were being measured against, a distinction that CIBC wished to build on and sustain.

"I was asked to evaluate all aspects of the training and support that the new Investment Specialist (IS) was receiving, as well as to provide specific recommendations on any areas where improvements could be made. Those initial assessments showed that the development program was delivering very acceptable results, with participants reporting an average of 7 actionable adult learnings for each day of training. At the time I shared the general belief that longer programs should deliver at least 3 actionable learnings each day, and that in the rarest of cases, that number could go as high as 10 per day. At 7 learnings per day, this ten day program had participants leaving with the knowledge and ability to apply 70 or more new actionable responsibilities.

TRAINING



**NORMAN L.
TRAINOR**

It was clear to me, from those numbers, why this group was enjoying industry respect and recognition for their success. That was not enough for Stoney, Steve, or the rest of the IS Group's management team. They were seeking ways to add more content, reduce the amount of time it was taking for the new IS to convert training into productive results, and to increase the value of the more than 3,500 pages of reference materials each IS packed away in boxes following the initial training program."

Working closely with Brent and Kudel, Davidson was able to identify three key elements in the program design that could benefit by applying newer and more effective learning and competency methods. By using specific 'constructive learning', 'criterion referencing', and 'action planning' approaches, they hoped to simplify the learning process, add more content, increase the long term value of the training materials, and assist the new IS in putting the learning into practice starting on their first day of work after the program.

Davidson describes these methods and how they were applied. "We know that adults are constructive learners, building on their own experience and existing knowledge. This meant that our first challenge was to apply the principal of 'constructive learning' requiring us to identify the order in which training material should be organ-

ized. We started by looking for barriers to learning. What individual concerns, preconceptions, and misconceptions were the new IS's, as adults, likely to have that could distract them from achieving the key learning objectives. Some of these were obvious. On starting a new role, individuals will have concerns about their compensation packages, employee benefits, probation periods, compliance and regulations, job descriptions, phone number, desk, expense reporting... and so on. These all needed to be dealt with on the first day of training if we were to earn the attention of the participants.

"We next looked at the order in which content was delivered. This involved breaking each of the 38 modules into lists of prerequisite knowledge or experience needed to accomplish the key learning objectives. We discovered that more than half the modules had prerequisites that were being delivered much later in the program. This left us with a relatively simple task of re-ordering the sequence of the modules. We were also surprised to discover that the smallest module itself had 8 actionable learning objectives already listed. The development programs were only achieving results of 70 actionable learnings from a list with over 400 objectives.

"Our second challenge, following the principles of 'criterion referencing' was to convert the boxes of binders, books and handouts into a meaningful and valuable library of information for the IS. We achieved this with the simple and elegant solution of providing each participant with a series of 3 ring, 3½" binders, divided into the 43 modules, into which all the learning materials were placed. Each participant was provided a master index of the four binders which were then ready to place on the shelf, in the office, for easy reference by the IS, or for use by the IS in their training and mentoring activities.

The extra attention to sequencing of the modules, organizing reference materials, and planning those post learning activities

Continued on next page

has produced results well above expectations, three of which are illustrated in the table below.

When they began this process, all three were asked the same thing, 'Why would you want to consider changing a program that is already among the best in the industry?', a question that comes from the traditional thinking of *'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'* Davidson has his own version for this age old adage *'If it ain't broke, and you don't fix it, you soon could be.'*

"In today's marketplace, complacency is an all too dangerous rut that a business can easily fall into," Kudel comments, "Instead of leaving well enough alone, we concentrated our efforts on improving our program's focus on developing specific

competencies and support for the participant's post learning success. One key to building sustainable competitive advantage is an unshakable commitment to excellence and continuous improvement."

"To be a leader in your field, part of your responsibility is to keep moving forward in both your thinking, and your actions," adds Brent, "Experiences like this help to emphasize that the best opportunities in business are often found in reexamining and improving on current strengths, instead of focusing attention and efforts on trying to find and fix problems."

These results also set a new standard for those of us involved in designing, building, and delivering adult learning programs.

We now know it is possible to achieve 100 or more actionable learnings a day, and our programs should be assessed on how effectively we identify, measure and deliver competency based learning objectives. We owe it to ourselves as training professionals, to our clients for the obvious bottom-line value it will add to their business, and most importantly to the participants that these programs are intended to serve and empower.

Norm Trainor is a principal with The Covenant Group, a consulting company specializing in training and development.

This article first appeared in the September 1997 edition of the Canadian Human Resources Journal, the HR Reporter.

	ORIGINAL PROGRAM	AVERAGE OF REVISED PROGRAMS
LEARNING MODULES	38	43
ACTIONABLE LEARNINGS	73	> 800 [with 86 started and/or completed during the program]
PRODUCTIVITY	4 ~ 12 weeks	1 ~ 4 weeks

CANADIAN
HR Reporter

Reprinted with permission.

For more information on this article and on the use of Skills & Capabilities Assessments, contact:





Delivering Distance Learning

"All education is a form of distance learning. It may be only a distance of five feet, or it may cross oceans, but in every case it requires moving the learner from where they are to a new desired state." Geoff Davidson

April 17, 1996 presentation to Centennial College faculty, Toronto, ON Canada

The Three³ Learning Matrix

Working with industry leaders, **sales.org™** has provided consultation, design tools, and program management services to assist organizations in the development, deployment and continuous improvement of training and education programs. Our approach is unique and effective, applying a comprehensive "Learning Matrix" model that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness by identifying individual attributes and heuristics of the learner, the subject material, and the delivery media. Successful learning is best achieved through optimizing the delivery of training by the methods that most efficiently accommodate the individual learning style of each student, at the level of detail necessary to enable the desired change in capabilities and performance.

Reviewing Learning Styles

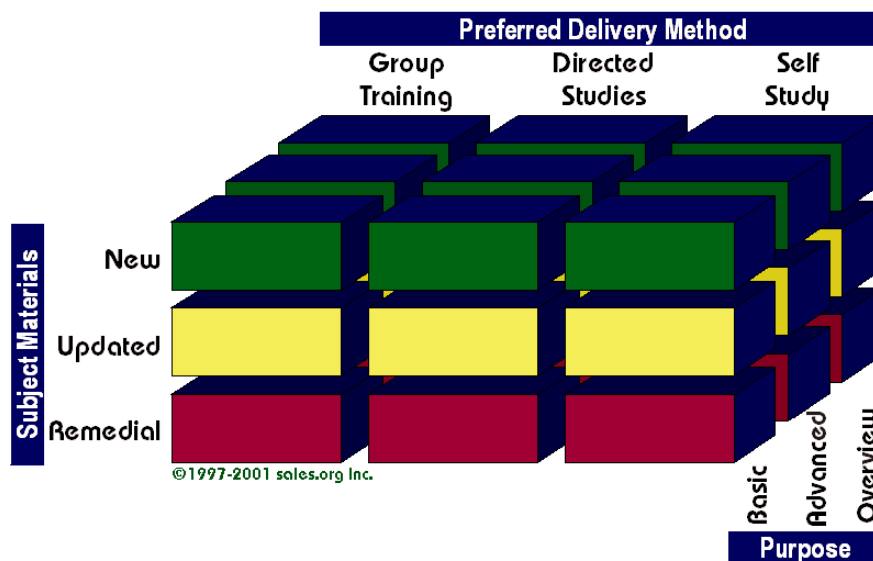
Different people learn different subjects differently at different points in their lives.

When facing a question of learning theories, there are dozens of formal academic and practical models to consider. In addition, research into cognition demonstrates a significant co-relation between the effectiveness of various learning methods and the individual's heuristics, biases, personality, temperaments, circumstances, experiences and learning environments.

Applying the Learning Matrix

This model has been developed to help clients identify and make the best use of the most effective delivery method(s) available to meet the specific competency needs of each individual. This may be any single method or combination of methods whether this means classroom, textbook, coaching, video, CD Interactive, Internet, Intranet, PC Lab or any combination of these alternative mediums.

Three³ Learning Matrix





MANAGEMENT

Skills & Capabilities Assessments

© 1995 • 2002 sales.org Inc.

Thea X. Sample

Thea X. Sample

This Assessment samples your general ability to analyze, recognize, and solve a selected set of common situations, practices, opportunities, and issues you may encounter on a day to day basis.

The first table reports specific results based on your demonstrated capability to perform these general management skills.

SKILL & CAPABILITY	YOUR SCORE DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCY
Listening	consistent with: <u>advanced skills & capabilities</u>
Questioning	consistent with: <u>strong skills & capabilities</u>
Relationship & Trust Building	consistent with: <u>strong skills & capabilities</u>
Leadership	consistent with: <u>advanced skills & capabilities</u>
Coaching	consistent with: <u>strong skills & capabilities</u>
Business Analysis & Planning	consistent with: <u>advanced skills & capabilities</u>
Recruiting & Development	consistent with: <u>strong skills & capabilities</u>
Customer Service	consistent with: <u>strong skills & capabilities</u>
Computation	consistent with: <u>advanced skills & capabilities</u>
COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT	Your results demonstrate overall Skills & Capabilities consistent with those expected from individuals providing more complex financial advice. (Score = 4)

The second table in this report is a personalized **SMART Action Planner**® that you will find on **Page 2**.

This planning document is produced to support you and your manager in identifying the professional development opportunities with the highest potential to increase your effectiveness and success in your career. These opportunities include learning and business goals and timetables targeting potential for enhancing your professional skills and capabilities, increasing your portfolio size and productivity, and enhancing the overall value you can deliver to salespeople as their manager.

While these suggestions are based on your performance on this assessment, it is important to confirm those results and the Action Plans with your manager to ensure that professional development plans are tailored to produce the best possible results for you, your clients, and your business.

SMART ©1996•2005 sales.org™

ACTION PLANNER



SPECIFIC PURPOSE, MOTIVE, OR OPPORTUNITY	1. Improve Questioning skills to advanced skills & capabilities level. 2. Increase coaching, cross-selling and recruiting through more effective questioning. 3. Establish new professional development objectives with your manager.
MEASURABLE GOALS & OBJECTIVES	1. Identify 10 opportunities to script, practice, and apply Questioning skills to specific sales management situations. 2. Identify and close 5 additional coaching or recruiting opportunities based on increased Questioning effectiveness. 3. Integrate these Learning goals into your Personal Development Plan [PDP].
ACTIONABLE ACTIVITIES & CONTACTS	1. • Review, or enroll in, the sales.org™ Success Full Attitude Power Questioning program, successfully completing the final assessments. • Review the Power Questioning modules, successfully completing both pre-tests and post-assessments. 2. Identify 10 new coaching situations with potential for new business, cross-selling, referral business or recruiting. 3. • Participate in 1 Scripting Clinic each week, bringing 1 new coaching situation to plan, prepare, and role-practice your Questioning skills. • Prepare a Questioning Script for each coaching presentation over the next 6 weeks. 4. Meet with each of the Clients using your Questioning scripts to identify new sales, service, or referral opportunities for each Client. 5. Review your Action Plan, Scripts, and PDP progress with your manager.
REALISTIC TIME, RESOURCES, & EXPECTATIONS	1. • Dedicate at least 2 hours weekly to review & complete study materials for 6 weeks. • Successfully complete Power Questioning post-assessments within 6 weeks. 2. Review Portfolio, branch, and referral opportunities to identify 10 new coaching situations to plan and prepare questioning scripts for over the next 2 weeks. 3. Arrange with your manager to set-up weekly Scripting Clinics with your team. 4. Schedule & complete 2 scripted coaching presentations weekly, identifying & closing 5 new business, cross-selling, or recruiting opportunities. 5. Schedule a weekly 30 minute progress report & conference call with your manager.
TIME-BOUND MILESTONES, COMPLETION, & FOLLOW-UP DATES	1. • Obtain learning materials by end of next week • Obtain Power Questioning materials, or enrol in program, by end of week 2. • Complete Power Questioning pre-tests by end of week 2. • Complete Power Questioning post-assessments by end of week 4. 2. Create list of 10 new coaching situations and opportunities by end of week 2. 3. • Complete 1 new Questioning script & presentation from Scripting Clinics weekly. • Complete Questioning scripts for at least 3 additional coaching presentations weekly for 5 weeks. • Close at least 1 goal per week from new coaching, cross-selling, or recruiting that result directly from planned and prepared Questioning scripts. 4. Meet with manager within 1 week if any milestones or completion dates are missed.