We've Cracked the Code!

Yup. That's right... we've cracked the code! We've discovered the 'internal' differences between sales managers and sales *leaders*!

You see, here at Sales Managers Australia we have just spent three months pouring over the data which has been jointly gathered by us and our partner Peoplogica, gathered over a period of fifteen years and found that the 'make-up', if you will, of those folks seen to be sales **leaders** is somewhat different to those considered to be sales 'managers'.

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I've worked with in excess of 1000 corporate clients in Australia (and to a lesser degree, New Zealand). One of our services is in creating High-Performance Role Benchmarks, whereby, using the Profiles Sales Assessment™, we assess those folks considered to be high-performers in their role. The Profiles Sales Assessment™ measures the combination of **cognitive ability**, **behavioural attributes** and **occupational interests**. Then the system takes the data from the assessments of these high-performers and identifies the common traits which are contributing to their success.

Over the last 9 years we have assessed thousands of people in various 'Head of Sales' roles (defined in this instance as: any person with responsibility for delivering sales results through and with others). During 2018 we approached several hundred of our corporate clients and, providing them with some definitions, asked them to indicate whether they felt their 'head of sales' was more 'manager' or 'leader'. As we got the responses we then took a look at the profiles we had of the 'managers' and then of their 'leaders'.

You can see the differences presented in the graphic below. The yellow area marks an area of difference, exhibited by the group defined as leaders.

Profiles Sales Assessment
Performance Model Description

Sales Managers vs Sales Leaders

Summary Graph

The shaded boxes represent the Performance Model for this position.

Learning Index	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Verbal Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Verbal Reasoning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**Thinking Style**
Numerical Ability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Numeric Reasoning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

Energy Level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Assertiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Sociability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Manageability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Attitude	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	**Behavioural Traits**
Decisiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Accommodating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Independence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Objective Judgement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

As far as Thinking Style and Cognitive Ability is concerned there is no discernible difference between the two.

In Behavioural Traits however, we see some departure:

- There is a much higher tendency toward extroversion by managers. A vey do-think-do orientation and a need to exert energy and take action. The **leaders are, comparatively somewhat more considered** – but not introverted;
- **Leaders have less *need* to socialise.** They can and will, as required but they do not need to do so. Managers display a higher level of Sociability (pushing well into the top quartile of the population) and a need to be part of a social cohesion;
- **The leader group present as rule-breakers** (1's and 2's) **or rule-benders** (3's & 4's) in the Manageability scale. They are more inclined to depart from 'standard operating procedure' than managers who show a preference to be adherents. Managers do desire some level of autonomy but they are much more risk averse than their leadership contemporaries. This seems to translate into 'career protection' on behalf of the manager group;
- Whilst neither group is at the extreme, managers do demonstrate a greater degree of cynicism and fault-finding than the leader group. The **leaders evidence somewhat more resilience and a healthy** (so, not 'blind') **optimism** and are more inclined to be opportunistic;
- The **leaders are significantly more decisive**. Managers are not 'paralysed' but they are markedly less inclined to make decisions or take action. Again, there is a correlation here to risk-aversion. This is a significant area for concern in our opinion as the need to act, once appropriate due diligence has been performed, seems to be imperative today. In our 360° feedback surveys we see a common complaint that managers are too risk-averse, feel the need to gather far too much information before making a decision and consequently squander opportunities that their team-members are trying to close. Much of the feedback suggests that employees view this as their manager undertaking 'career protection' – or 'covering their arse' as we refer to it colloquially;
- Of particular surprise was the degree of polarity when it comes to Objective Judgement. The manager group has a greater inclination (and preference) for subjective decision-making, with greater reliance

on gut feel. **The leader group is quite clearly more inclined towards data-driven and objective decision-making**.

We didn't expect there to be any particular common differences as far as Occupational Interests was concerned, as this area is often affected by the nature of the industry the individual is working in – which for most people is aligned with what they enjoy doing or being associated with. However, there was one discernible difference – the leader group tended to have **People Service** as their first or second preference. *Leaders like people.* Even in mechanical or technical type organisations. The manager group tended to place People Service third or lower, in level of interest.

"Leaders like people."

I hope you've found this interesting. If anybody has any questions I'd be delighted... and of course if you're interested in having an 'inventory' done on your sales management folks please do let us know. (PS. If you're not in sales but what you've read resonates, please consider sharing this article with your organisation's Sales Director or the MD.)