

ARE SALESPEOPLE BORN OR MADE

BY JOHN ASHER



John Asher, founder and CEO of ASHER, shows hiring managers why assessing aptitude (natural talent) is so important when hiring sales people.

There have been three meta-studies about the effectiveness of salespeople over the past twenty-five years. Harvard University conducted the first study in the late 1990's. The Gallup Organization studied over three million salespeople over a 25-year period. The results of this study were described last year in the book *"Discover Your Sales Strengths."* The HR Chally Group conducted a several-decade study of 80,000 salespeople and the results were outlined in the 2007 book *"Achieve Sales Excellence."*

All three studies show the same result—only a few business-to-business salespeople sell most of the products and services. An integration of the statistical results of the three studies shows that 4% of the country's salespeople sell 94% of the goods and services.

Are these salespeople born or made? There have also been numerous studies on this subject. Over 60 validity studies by the Craft organization (a leading sales aptitude publisher with over 25 years of experience) shows that the correlation of sales aptitude to sales results varies between 33% and 68%. This means that, on average, 50% of the sales results are based just on the salesperson's natural talent.

To reach the highest level of sales excellence usually takes five factors. They are:

1. Natural Talent/Aptitude (*Born*)
2. Product Knowledge (*Made*)
3. Selling Skills (*Made*)
4. Motivation (*Made*)
5. Selling Processes (*Made*)

These five factors have been described in-depth in a previous article, **"The Five Factors of Super Salespeople."** When salespeople have all five factors operating together, including an aptitude for sales, they have the potential to be one of the 4% of the country's exceptional salespeople.

Where do we find these people? One way is to grow our own. According to Craft, almost 20% of the two million people tested to date have a high natural aptitude for sales. According to the HR Chally study, 62% of the 2006 college graduates went into a sales-related job. It is becoming more important than ever to identify the people with the natural talent for sales.

Executive Summary

- 20% of the people in the US have a natural talent for sales.
- This natural talent accounts for 50% of the results of salespeople.
- The exceptional salespeople have both natural talent (born) and the other four factors (made); product knowledge, selling skills, motivation and selling processes.
- These are the 4% of the salespeople that sell 94% of the goods and services – The Super Salespeople.

For more information about aptitude assessments, go to www.salesDNAtest.com