

EMPLOYERS' GUIDE

Customer Service



Customer Service Aptitude Profile

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INTRODUCTION

The **Customer Service Aptitude Profile (Customer Service AP) Report** is an adaptation of the **Sales Achievement Predictor (SalesAP) Report** (Friedland, Marcus, & Mandel, 1995) designed to assist in the selection, placement, and development of people to work in customer service roles. The report describes characteristics related to customer service potential and performance, such as diplomacy, cooperativeness, patience, and assertiveness.

It offers a specific recommendation regarding a person's suitability for customer service work, and a listing of his or her relative strengths and weaknesses in the skills and behaviors associated with good customer service performance. Because many customer service roles include a sales component, specific scores that focus on a person's disposition toward sales-related activities are also provided. Additionally, the **Customer Service AP Report** includes subscales that are related to work habits, management potential, and personal style to produce a comprehensive profile. This information can help minimize costs associated with unfortunate customer service personnel hiring decisions and can help maximize employee retention in customer service roles.

Basic practical information to help you use the **Customer Service AP Report** is provided in this guide. For more detailed technical information about the development and psychometric background of the items and scale scores used to generate the report, consult the *SalesAP Manual*.

General Description

In order for you to obtain a **Customer Service AP Report** for an applicant or employee, he or she must first respond to 140 brief, self-descriptive statements. For each statement the respondent is asked to indicate on a 5-point scale how the statement applies to him or her (*1 = always true, 5 = always false*). The statements focus on how the person perceives his or her own emotions, values, achievement, motivation, personal and social styles, and work-related behavior. The items are appropriate for people aged 15 years and older, and are written at a sixth-grade reading level.

Percentile scores are calculated based on an individual's responses to the items, and then used to generate the **Customer Service AP Report**. The percentile scores are based on the responses of people in a reference sample that included 1,375 male and female working adults and job applicants, ages 15 and older. The scores can be calculated only by computer. One reason the report is set up this way is to make it more difficult for people to obtain scoring keys beforehand and discover how they should respond to achieve a "good" score. More importantly, hundreds of rules are used to determine whether to adjust percentile scores, and by how much, based on a person's response style. This would not be practical to implement with a hand-scoring system. The **Customer Service AP** is available online through **CareerID.com**.

A sample **Customer Service AP Report** is displayed on pages 6–16. At the top of the second page of the report is a specific recommendation regarding the individual's suitability for a customer service job. Below this there is a table that summarizes the applicant's customer service characteristics. The next page displays the individual's Customer Service Profile. At the top of the page there is a summarized interpretation of the individual's scores on the Response Style indexes. Two of these

scores—Self-Enhancement and Self-Criticism— are used to adjust test scores of unusually positive (“fake good”) or negative (“fake bad”) self-presentation styles. The third Response Style measure on the test is the Inconsistent Responding index, which determines whether or not the person understood the items or responded in a careless or random manner. This page also has a graph showing the scale scores that are provided in each report: (a) three special sales-related scores (Sales Disposition, Initiative-Cold Calling, and Sales Closing); (b) four Motivation and Achievement scores (Achievement, Motivation, Competitiveness, and Goal Orientation); (c) four Work Strengths scores (Planning, Initiative-General, Team Player, and Managerial); (d) four Interpersonal Strengths scores (Assertiveness, Personal Diplomacy, Extroversion, and Cooperativeness); and (e) three Inner Resources scores (Relaxed Style, Patience, and Self-Confidence).

The body of the report provides detailed information on the respondent’s scores for each scale. Toward the end of the report, the individual’s likely interest areas are provided, categorized by the major career interest constellations (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional). After this is a list of the respondent’s answers to each item. Separate from the main report is a set of practical suggestions for the individual to improve his or her customer service performance.

User Qualifications

The ***Customer Service AP Report*** should be used by human resource specialists, psychologists, or trained individuals under their direct supervision. The confidentiality of an individual’s results should be safeguarded, and anyone with access to this information should be knowledgeable and competent to interpret and understand it. As with any testing materials, ***Customer Service AP Report*** results should never be the sole source of information for making personnel decisions, which should rely on all available test, interview, and background information.

Customer Service AP

Report prepared for: **John Sample**

2-May-2006

Customer Service Aptitude Profile

Jotham G. Friedland, Ph.D.

Sander I. Marcus, Ph.D.

Harvey P. Mandel, Ph.D.

Sample Customer Service AP Profile Report

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CustomerAP Report for John Sample
2-May-2006

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SNAPSHOT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

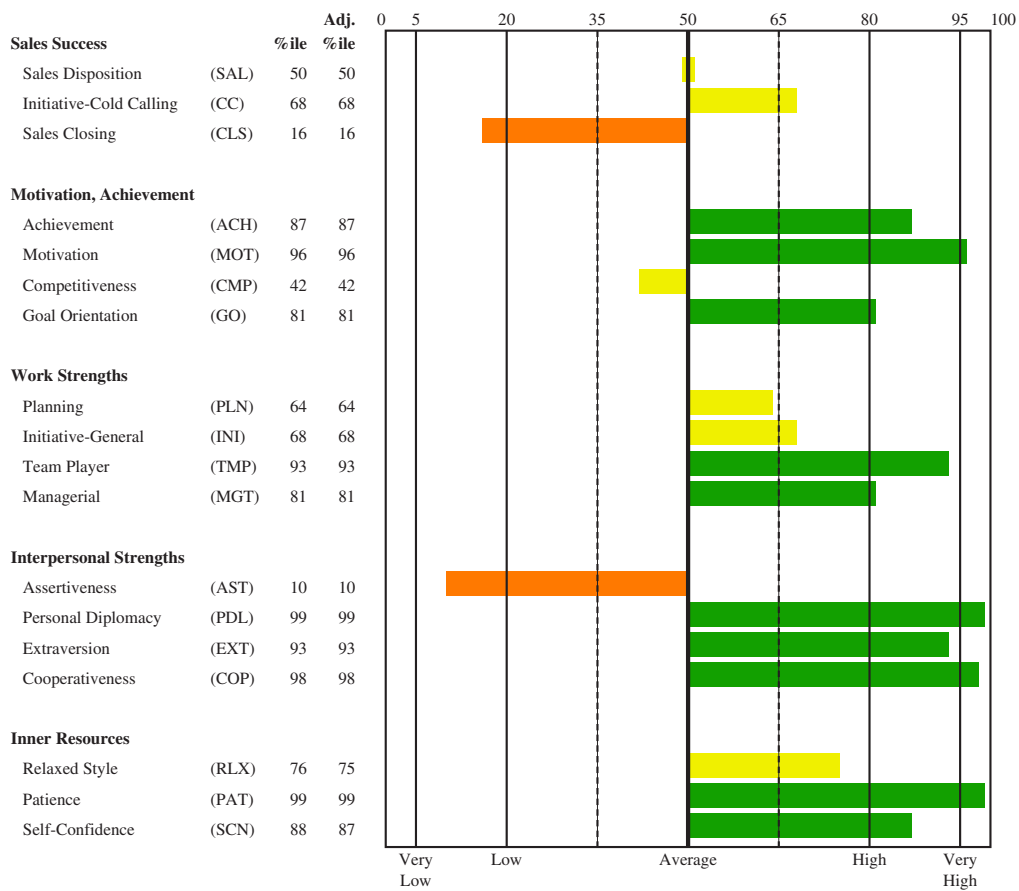
HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR A CUSTOMER SERVICE ROLE.

Customer Service Characteristics	Strength	Potential Strength	Needs Development
Diplomacy in relating to others	■		
A cooperative attitude	■		
Patience	■		
A relaxed attitude	■		
An ability to restrain assertiveness in relating to others	■		
A focus on achievement and getting things done	■		
An ability to be non-competitive at times when relating to others		■	

More detailed information is provided in the body of this report.

CUSTOMER SERVICE PROFILE

Validity: This person appears to have responded to Customer Service AP items consistently and without unusual emphasis on positive or negative responses.



Users of this WPS Test Report should be familiar with the material presented in the Employers' Guide to the Customer Service AP. No personnel or other decision should be made based on this report alone without confirming information from independent sources.

Validity and Response Style

The Validity and Response Style scales represent the individual's level of attention to the meaning of Customer Service AP statements (Inconsistent Responding) and tendency toward positive (Self-Enhancing) or negative (Self-Critical) self-presentation.

The Inconsistent Responding (INC) score of 2 indicates that this person paid appropriate attention to the meaning of Customer Service AP statements when giving responses, and is not likely to have responded carelessly or in a completely random fashion.

This person obtained a Self-Enhancing (ENH) score at the 72nd percentile. This indicates a style of self-presentation that is as positive as that of most people. Others are likely to describe this person's self-regard as positive.

In addition, the Self-Critical (CRT) score at the 31st percentile suggests that this individual does not emphasize negative characteristics or make self-critical statements any more or less than do most others.

Customer Service and Inside Sales Characteristics

Characteristics that are important to success in most customer service or inside sales roles are reflected to a large extent in an individual's responses to items on the Personal Diplomacy (PDL), Patience (PAT), and Relaxed Style (RLX) scales. To a lesser extent, responses to items on the Assertiveness (AST) scale and an expressed interest in career areas related to education or social service also indicate characteristics that contribute to success in customer service settings.

This individual's Personal Diplomacy (PDL) score is at the 99th percentile indicating that he or she will be more diplomatic than most people, which can be a real asset in a customer service or inside sales role.

This Patience (PAT) score at the 99th percentile indicates a person who is likely to be more patient than most people, which can be of great value in such settings.

With an Assertiveness (AST) score at the 10th percentile, this individual appears to have a strong tolerance for situations that require him or her to refrain from asserting his or her own demands in transactions with others, and this can be an advantage in many customer service settings.

The Relaxed Style (RLX) score at the 75th percentile suggests that he or she is likely to be relaxed in most customer service and inside sales situations.

He or she appears to be at least moderately interested in a role such as customer service, that involves helping others to meet their needs and achieve their goals.

Consideration of additional customer service success characteristics reflected by this person's Customer Service AP responses is provided in the following detailed interpretation of the Customer Service AP scale scores.

Sales Success Characteristics

Because many customer service roles include a sales component, aspects of this individual's Customer Service AP responses that reflect his or her likelihood of being successful in sales work are considered in this section.

The Sales Success scores include three scores. The Sales Disposition (SAL) score indicates the degree to which an individual's Customer Service AP results are similar to those observed for people who are successful in sales careers. The Initiative-Cold Calling (CC) score summarizes an individual's responses to statements from the Initiative-General (INI) scale that reflect characteristics necessary for success in cold-calling. The Sales Closing (CL) score indicates the degree to which an individual's Customer Service AP results are similar to those observed for people who are successful in closing sales.

This individual's Sales Success scores are at the 50th percentile for Sales Disposition (SAL), at the 68th percentile for Initiative-Cold Calling (CC), and at the 16th percentile for Sales Closing (CL).

The Customer Service AP responses for this individual are only marginally similar to those typical of people who successfully perform sales activities.

He or she can be at least moderately effective at cold-calling.

Motivation and Achievement Characteristics

The Motivation and Achievement scales describe a person's orientation toward achievement and inner drive to achieve.

The Achievement (ACH) scale score reflects an individual's ability to follow through and complete tasks and to achieve specific goals. It is also related to the amount of interest that a person has in intellectual or conceptual work. The ACH score at the 87th percentile for this person indicates he or she consistently achieves and follows through.

This person is likely to perform at a high level on measures of academic achievement.

He or she is likely to perform exceptionally well on the job.

whose motivation or inner drive is relatively strong and who is likely to sustain this level of motivation

The Competitiveness (CMP) score reflects the need to win, to perform better than others, or to surpass standards of achievement or performance. This individual's CMP score at the 42nd percentile suggests that he or she is likely to value competitiveness, but only in areas that are particularly important to him or her.

The Goal Orientation (GO) scale describes the extent to which an individual sees himself or herself as having clear goals and objectives. This person's GO score at the 81st percentile indicates that he or she is likely to be more strongly focused on goals and objectives than are most people.

Work Strengths

The Work Strengths scales describe actual work habits and attitudes towards working alone and with others.

The Planning (PLN) scale score reflects a person's tendency to use time-management, scheduling, and organizing and planning strategies to achieve goals. The PLN score at the 64th percentile suggests that this individual will plan, organize, and apply effective work habits in areas of high interest. He or she may attend to details and plans enough to succeed in projects or tasks of high interest, but may not apply this same level of concentration to tasks that are uninteresting, boring, or unrelated to major goals. Even when performing well, he or she may not use the most efficient or effective work habits or time management strategies. Still, performance in this area is likely to be developed at least well enough to successfully pursue specific goals.

He or she can accept direction from others, including supervisors at work, and will be comfortable when given such

direction.

The Initiative-General (INI) scale indicates a person's level of comfort in taking independent action. The INI score at the 68th percentile is in a range that suggests that this individual may show initiative in some situations but not in others.

The Team Player (TMP) scale score relates to a person's level of comfort in working together as part of a team or interdependent work group. This TMP score at the 93rd percentile suggests this person sees himself or herself as getting along well with others. He or she will probably work very well with others as part of a team or work group, and may even prefer this type of arrangement.

The Managerial (MGT) score represents the degree to which a person's work strengths combine with achievement, motivation, interpersonal strengths, and inner resources in a pattern similar to that of individuals in managerial and supervisory roles. This individual's MGT score at the 81st percentile suggests that he or she has given responses that are similar to those given by people in management, supervisory, or other leadership roles. This person is likely to be able to consistently inspire and motivate others. He or she may be seen as having good overall management or supervisory potential.

Yet his or her management style may be seen as less assertive than that of others in similar positions.

He or she may have difficulty delegating authority and could benefit from developing skills in this area.

Interpersonal Strengths

The Interpersonal Strengths scales describe ways in which a person is likely to engage in interactions with others in the work environment. These characteristics play a very important part in the successful conduct of customer service activities.

The Assertiveness (AST) scale score provides a gauge of an individual's directness in expressing himself or herself and in dealing with others. This person's AST score at the 10th percentile indicates an individual who is relatively unassertive and less direct in expressing himself or herself than are most others. In many kinds of customer service situations, this style can be an asset.

The Personal Diplomacy (PDL) scale score reflects a person's tendency to use tact and diplomacy in dealing with others and to display sensitivity to the feelings and ideas of others. For this person, the PDL score at the 99th percentile suggests that he or she is generally very diplomatic, tactful, and highly aware of the reactions of others, a major advantage in most customer service settings.

Although individuals with this combination of AST and PDL scores are usually not very direct when expressing themselves to others, their style is almost always likely to be perceived as tactful.

The Extroversion (EXT) scale score indicates the degree to which a person sees himself or herself as socially outgoing. For this individual, the EXT score at the 93rd percentile indicates a person who describes himself or herself as more extroverted than most people, which can be an asset in many customer service settings, and who will be comfortable in most customer service situations that require taking the lead in establishing contact with others.

The Cooperativeness (COP) score indicates a person's level of comfort in working closely with others and in taking the lead from others. A low COP score does not necessarily indicate uncooperativeness, but may indicate independence or aggressiveness in dealing with others. This COP score at the 98th percentile suggests that this person is likely to be very comfortable in taking directions or suggestions from others and working cooperatively, which is an ideal characteristic in most customer service roles.

Inner Resources

The Inner Resources scales describe the kind of work-related inner resources that a person brings to the work environment.

The Relaxed Style (RLX) scale score describes the ability to remain free of worry and tension in the face of stress. This RLX score at the 75th percentile describes a person who finds it easy to relax and can successfully cope with most stressful situations. He or she can generally work effectively under pressure.

The Relaxed Style (RLX) scale score describes the ability to remain free of worry and tension in the face of stress. This RLX score at the 75th percentile describes a person who is He or she has a generally relaxed, outgoing style and will reach out to others in most business, academic, or social settings, which is a distinct advantage in most customer service roles.

The Patience (PAT) scale indicates a person's ability to effectively cope with frustration encountered in completing tasks or in conflict-laden situations. This individual's PAT score at the 99th percentile suggests that he or she is more patient than most. This would be an advantage in most customer service settings.

The Self-Confidence (SCN) score is an indicator of the level of confidence and self-assurance an individual brings to his or her work. The SCN score at the 87th percentile suggests this person is generally self-confident and self-assured, which would be an asset in most customer service settings.

This confidence is balanced by an openness to examining his or her own strengths and weaknesses.

Additional Profile Characteristics

In addition to the interpretation of single scores on the Customer Service AP scales, some specific combinations of Sales Success Characteristics, Motivation and Achievement Characteristics, Work Strengths, Interpersonal Strengths, and Inner Resources are associated with particular approaches to the work environment related to performing in a customer service role.

Careful consideration of this person's scores in combination will shed additional light on his or her particular work strengths.

Career Interest Areas

Some clusters of Customer Service AP items are often observed to be associated with the traditional Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Entrepreneurial, and Conventional occupational interest areas. Below is an indication of how interested this individual is in each of these areas as well as a short explanation of the occupational interest for each area.

Realistic: *Low* - Activity-oriented occupational areas such as skilled trades, engineering, armed services, police, and firefighting, or similar technical and service occupations.

Investigative: *Moderate* - Investigative or academic, scientific, and technical occupational areas such as medicine, education, computers, science, and similar areas.

Artistic: *Moderate* - Artistic or aesthetic areas such as graphic arts, writing, advertising, music, fine arts, or similar areas having a strong aesthetic or craft component.

Social: *High* - Social or educational and social service areas such as teaching, social work, social service direction and recreation, or counseling.

Entrepreneurial: *Low* - Entrepreneurial or legal, political, and business endeavors such as marketing, management, or merchandising.

Conventional: *Moderate* - Conventional business areas such as accounting, banking, office work, and office management.

Listing of recorded information

Name: John Sample

Date tested: 2-May-2006

ITEM RESPONSES

The scores and the interpretation in the SalesAP Report are based on the responses listed here.

001. 5 | 002. 3 | 003. 1 | 004. 4 | 005. 2 | 006. 4 | 007. 3 | 008. 1 | 009. 3 | 010. 2 |
011. 1 | 012. 2 | 013. 4 | 014. 3 | 015. 4 | 016. 2 | 017. 2 | 018. 2 | 019. 1 | 020. 1 |
021. 2 | 022. 4 | 023. 5 | 024. 4 | 025. 5 | 026. 2 | 027. 1 | 028. 1 | 029. 1 | 030. 1 |
031. 3 | 032. 4 | 033. 2 | 034. 4 | 035. 2 | 036. 1 | 037. 4 | 038. 5 | 039. 1 | 040. 4 |
041. 5 | 042. 4 | 043. 3 | 044. 2 | 045. 3 | 046. 1 | 047. 4 | 048. 3 | 049. 1 | 050. 3 |
051. 4 | 052. 2 | 053. 1 | 054. 1 | 055. 4 | 056. 1 | 057. 5 | 058. 4 | 059. 3 | 060. 4 |
061. 1 | 062. 4 | 063. 2 | 064. 4 | 065. 3 | 066. 3 | 067. 1 | 068. 4 | 069. 4 | 070. 1 |
071. 2 | 072. 4 | 073. 1 | 074. 1 | 075. 5 | 076. 4 | 077. 5 | 078. 3 | 079. 3 | 080. 5 |
081. 2 | 082. 2 | 083. 1 | 084. 1 | 085. 3 | 086. 1 | 087. 2 | 088. 2 | 089. 5 | 090. 4 |
091. 4 | 092. 2 | 093. 2 | 094. 2 | 095. 2 | 096. 4 | 097. 5 | 098. 3 | 099. 1 | 100. 1 |
101. 4 | 102. 1 | 103. 1 | 104. 1 | 105. 2 | 106. 2 | 107. 1 | 108. 1 | 109. 4 | 110. 3 |
111. 3 | 112. 4 | 113. 4 | 114. 3 | 115. 5 | 116. 4 | 117. 4 | 118. 1 | 119. 2 | 120. 3 |
121. 3 | 122. 1 | 123. 2 | 124. 1 | 125. 1 | 126. 2 | 127. 3 | 128. 4 | 129. 2 | 130. 2 |
131. 3 | 132. 1 | 133. 2 | 134. 2 | 135. 1 | 136. 3 | 137. 1 | 138. 1 | 139. 2 | 140. 1 |

Response Key

1 Always True

2 Mostly True

3 Sometimes True and Sometimes False

4 Mostly False

5 Always False

End of the Report

Customer Service Achievement Recommendations

These recommendations, based on the Customer Service AP test profile, are designed to help you improve or enhance your motivation and achieve your goals in customer service roles and activities.

You may find some of these suggestions more helpful than others. Because your motivation is one of your most valuable assets, it is highly recommended that you make a continuing, long-term effort to use those suggestions that you discover to be the most effective.

Refine Your Goals

- Exercise your strong ability to set meaningful priorities and define worthwhile goals. Be involved in planning and organizing customer service activities that will enhance your own performance and that of your group or business.
- Do not allow your strong ability to perceive appropriate goals become an end in itself, so that your attention is deflected from other essential aspects of successful customer service achievement, such as commitment, planning, and follow-through.
- Be sure to link your customer service goals and objectives to specific plans and activities, and examine your daily activities to make sure they are furthering these goals and objectives.
- Even if you are in an academic situation and are performing up to your potential, periodically reevaluate and update your major goals and objectives.

Increase Your Motivation and Level of Commitment

- Make use of your ability to motivate and inspire yourself and others in customer service situations. Link your inner enthusiasm, emotions, and motivational drive to your customer service goals and objectives. Making sure in this way that the other elements of success are in place will help you maintain success in customer service over a long period of time.
- Think of other individuals who have already been successful in attaining customer service goals you are striving for. The prospect of surpassing their achievements can be a meaningful and powerful motivator. If this is so for you, keep their example in mind more often, not only in areas of high interest, but in other areas as well.
- Keep in mind that those who achieve outstanding success in a customer service role do not settle for mediocre or even above average performance. Strive to be the best at all times and under all circumstances.
- When working towards a customer service goal, routinely compare your progress to those who are the most successful.

Be Sure to Plan Ahead and Follow Through

- Make priority lists of customer service goals that are time-consuming, or important, or that you may not have previously considered as important. Number or rank these goals in order of importance.
- Choose one important goal to focus on. Make a list of the specific activities, tasks, or interim accomplishments necessary to achieve this goal, and note the time and resources needed for each.
- Number these items in order, either from most important to least important or in the order in which they need to be accomplished.
- Learn other time-management, organizing, and scheduling strategies that can be applied to customer service goals.
- Make use of to-do lists, reminders, and other methods for planning and scheduling your time and activities, not only for obvious customer service goals, but also for other goals which you may not have considered as important up to now but which could become more significant in the future.
- Even though your planning and work habits are probably sufficient in many situations, you still may benefit from further developing your time-management, planning, reading, and study skills, by applying a more consistent level of

attention to detail, and by exercising a greater degree of perseverance in your pursuit of success.

- Make an extra effort to exercise planning and organizing skills such as setting priorities, scheduling, and using daily to-do lists in developing your customer service skills.
- You should be involved in customer service roles and activities for yourself and for your group or business that fully engage your strong ability to follow through on tasks, objectives, or goals.
- In addition to exercising your strong follow-through skills, be sure to remember that in most customer service roles, it is important to simply be helpful to others.
- Be sure to link your strong follow-through skills to your major customer service goals, so that these skills are not engaged simply for the purpose of getting things done, but will directly further your most important goals in this area.
- If you are in an academic situation, even if you are already satisfied with your level of achievement, you may still want to consider refining your ability to concentrate, focus, and manage your time efficiently. For example, you may benefit from reviewing deadlines for reports or the completion of other assignments and resetting them for an earlier date.

Expand Your Personal and Interpersonal Skills

- Your profile indicates that you may benefit from activities and techniques that will increase assertiveness in social and business situations. This does not mean becoming overly aggressive, but rather learning how to be more comfortable in offering reactions, ideas, and opinions. Books and specialized seminars or workshops may be helpful in learning and practicing assertiveness skills. Nevertheless, remember that a lower level of assertiveness is likely to make you more rather than less successful in most customer service situations.
- If you are considering a career in sales, or need to "sell" yourself in your work, consider some sales training or reading sales training materials to become more comfortable with the need to enhance the "sales" element of your interpersonal style.
- If you find that you are hesitant to call or meet with new people in social or career situations (what sales people refer to as "cold-calling"), you may find it beneficial to set aside a few minutes every day to call at least one person important to your career or your job, even if the call is just to "touch base" and say hello. This type of networking can widen your contact base and can make a difference in your career in the long run.
- If you find that you are not always successful in influencing others to your way of thinking, you might consider some sales training in the area of sales closing techniques and approaches, even if you are not a salesperson.
- Consider utilizing any supervisory, managerial, or mentoring skills you have to help others achieve their potential. Even if you are not formally in a managerial role, this will help you to widen your network and enhance your value to others and to your career.
- While your profile indicates that you have characteristics similar to successful managers and supervisors, your managerial potential would benefit if you were to enhance your assertiveness skills through specialized training in assertiveness techniques and approach on the job and in a managerial role.
- While your profile indicates that you have characteristics similar to successful managers and supervisors, your managerial potential would benefit if you were to demonstrate greater decisiveness.
- You are likely to find that the support and cooperation you give in working with others is highly important in a customer service situation. However, consider whether this might keep you from taking the initiative in other career situations where independence and aggressiveness are necessary for success.
- Being diplomatic or tactful in not directly offering your ideas and reactions to others may be an asset in customer service situations, but it is not always an asset in other career situations.

ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING

The test items used to generate the **Customer Service AP Report** can be administered in individual or group settings. The administration setting should be as comfortable, well lighted, ventilated, and free from noise and other distractions as possible. If you are administering the items in a group setting, you should read the instructions aloud while the respondents read along. Arrange group administration settings so that confidentiality is protected, and discourage respondents from influencing each other's responses by making side comments or otherwise expressing judgments.

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In both individual and group settings, you should encourage respondents to ask any questions they may have and to respond truthfully. Discourage them from spending a great deal of time on any one item. Remind the respondents that it is important to answer all of the questions and to give only one response to each question. The test cannot be scored if four or more items are missing. The program on the **CareerId** site is designed so that the test taker is not permitted to give multiple answers for a single item or to leave too many questions unanswered. Although there is no time limit for completing the 140 test items, this is usually done in 20 to 25 minutes.

Visually impaired respondents may require that the items be read to them, and respondents with motor impairments may require assistance. There is no evidence that accommodations to these disabilities by reading the items aloud or assisting in filling out answer sheets impacts on the validity of the responses. You should, however, be aware of indications that the respondent is uncomfortable and directly address the problem by clarifying the purpose of the testing and providing assurances of confidentiality. If you have any doubts about a respondent's English fluency, you should check his or her comprehension of the test instructions, a few items, and such expressions as "workaholic," "do my own thing," "big picture," and "just going through the motions," all of which appear on the test form. Any divergence from standard test administration procedures should be clearly stated in all reporting of results, along with an estimation of how such divergence may have influenced the individual's overall performance on the test.

INTERPRETATION

As previously described, on the first page of the report, the individual's identifying information is provided, followed by a basic recommendation for customer service: "Highly recommended for a customer service role," "Basically recommended for a customer service role," or "Not recommended for a customer service role." The recommendation is followed by a list of the person's customer service strengths and weaknesses. Next, a section is printed in which the validity of the individual's item responses is considered. A graph with adjusted percentile scores for all scales is then presented, followed by the body of the interpretive report, which includes suggestions regarding major career interests and professional development.

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Table 1 contains a list of the scores included in the **Customer Service AP Report**, as well as a brief description of and sample items from each scale. Scale scores for the *Customer Service AP* are displayed as percentiles, which rank the respondent in terms of all of the people who were included in the reference sample. A percentile rank of 50 means that 50% of the reference sample obtained a lower score on a given scale and 50% obtained a higher score. A rank of 75 means that 75% of the sample obtained a lower score and 25% obtained a higher one. A rank of 98 means that 98% of the sample obtained a lower score and only 2% obtained a higher one. It is important that any interpretation of single scores or groups of scales take the testing context and other independently obtained information into account. As previously noted, no personnel decision should be made solely on the basis of the statements in the **Customer Service AP Report**.

The general characteristic reflected by each score on the **Customer Service AP Report** (see Table 1) is described in the report, along with specific score interpretations. Detailed technical information about the scales can be obtained from the *SalesAP Manual*.

TABLE 1. CUSTOMER SERVICE AP SCORES	
<i>Customer Service AP Scale</i>	<i>Sample Items</i>
RESPONSE STYLE	
Inconsistent Responding (INC) Haphazard responding or highly inconsistent self-description.	<i>INC Item Pair</i> 23. I find life boring. 91. I feel like I am "just going through the motions."
Self-Enhancing (ENH) Positive self-description; presenting oneself as having positive characteristics; denying weaknesses that most people admit to.	2. I worry about decisions I have made. 92. I work hard.
Self-Critical (CRT) Negative self-description; presenting oneself in a self-critical manner.	4. I am nervous. 18. I hide my feelings.

(table continued on next page)

TABLE 1. CONT. CUSTOMER SERVICE AP SCORES

<i>Customer Service AP Scale</i>	<i>Sample Item Pairs</i>
SALES SUCCESS	
Sales Disposition (SAL) Similarity of overall personality characteristics with individuals in sales.	9. I take risks. 51. I like to sell.
Initiative-Cold Calling (CC) Similarity of characteristics to individuals who are successful in cold-calling activities.	15. I say what I feel. 39. I make new friends easily.
Sales Closing (CL) Similarity of characteristics to individuals who are successful in closing sales.	42. I am able to manipulate others. 58. I ask directly for what I want.
MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT	
Achievement (ACH) Achievement and task completion; achievement of specific goals; follow-through.	52. Throughout my life I have kept up with my peers academically. 81. I've "got my act together."
Motivation (MOT) Inner commitment to achieve; strength of inner emotions, needs, and values; inner drive.	27. I like this period of my life. 118. I like to work.
Competitiveness (CMP) Need to win, to perform better than others, or to surpass standards of achievement or performance.	68. I like to compete. 80. I believe that life is a big game to be played to win.
Goal Orientation (GO) Having clear goals and objectives.	127. I am "right on course" in attaining my career goals. 82. To me the future looks good.
WORK STRENGTHS	
Planning (PLN) Using time-management, scheduling, and other work habits and planning strategies to achieve goals.	72. I am well organized. 14. I plan for the future.
Initiative-General (INI) Comfort in taking independent initiative.	28. My success is up to me. 43. I like to risk starting and managing new activities.
Team Player (TMP) Comfort in working together as part of a team or interdependent work group.	86. There are people I can depend on. 87. I trust others.
Managerial (MGT) Similarity of overall personality characteristics with those of individuals in managerial or supervisory roles (e.g., comfort with decision making and ability to influence others).	139. Others perceive me as being competent. 17. Others respect me.

(table continued on next page)

TABLE 1. CONT. CUSTOMER SERVICE AP SCORES

<i>Customer Service AP Scale</i>	<i>Sample Item Pairs</i>
INTERPERSONAL STRENGTHS	
Assertiveness (AST) Directness in expressing oneself and in dealing with others.	70. I like to speak in front of a group. 131. I am able to influence others to my way of thinking.
Personal Diplomacy (PDL) Tact and diplomacy in dealing with others; sensitivity to the feelings and ideas of others.	53. I am sensitive to others' feelings. 5. People like me.
Extroversion (EXT) Socially outgoing or extraverted.	16. Throughout my life I have kept up with my peers socially. 105. I have lots of energy.
Cooperativeness (COP) Comfort in working closely with others or in taking the lead from others.	110. I resent being told what to do. 57. I have stepped on others to get ahead.
INNER RESOURCES	
Relaxed Style (RLX) Free of tension; unworried; relaxed.	2. I worry about decisions I have made. 67. I sleep very well.
Patience (PAT) Patience in task completion and in handling frustration or conflict.	8. I am patient at work. 37. I argue with people I care about.
Self-Confidence (SCN) Self-assurance and confidence in self.	135. I am emotionally stable. 93. I am satisfied with who I am.

Profile Validity and Response Style Scores

Validity and Response Style scores on the **Customer Service AP Report** are listed and discussed on the second page of the report. They include the Inconsistent Responding, Self-Enhancing, and Self-Critical scores.

The Inconsistent Responding scale helps to detect inconsistent response patterns. It consists of 15 item pairs, such as the one shown in Table 1, that have similar content and are usually given responses that do not differ or differ only slightly. The Inconsistent Responding score is the number of item pairs for which the given responses differ by 2 or more points. When a score of 5 or more is observed on this scale, there is a substantial likelihood that the responses were given in a haphazard or inconsistent manner or without appropriate attention to item content, and this should be kept in mind when interpreting a person's obtained scores.

The items that make up the Self-Enhancing and Self-Critical scores were selected to monitor tendencies for individuals to present themselves in an overly positive or negative light. They reflect ordinary weaknesses that most individuals admit to but do not emphasize. Those with relatively high Self-Enhancing scores minimize or deny such ordinary foibles, while those with high Self-Critical

cal scores tend to overemphasize them. On the other hand, those with relatively low Self-Enhancing scores tend to understate their positive characteristics and those with low Self-Critical scores tend to understate their own strengths.

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Percentile Score Adjustments

The percentile scores used to generate *Customer Service AP Report* may be adjusted based on an individual's overall response style as indicated by the Self-Enhancing and Self-Critical scores. These adjustments have been determined by a combination of statistical analysis and the author's experience using the test. Whenever adjustments are made, both unadjusted and adjusted scores are displayed along the left margin of the graph so that you can exercise reasonable judgment to evaluate the appropriateness of using adjusted scores for a given purpose. It is recommended that all available sources of data be incorporated in making final hiring or placement decisions.

Case Example

The respondent in the sample report displayed on pages 6–15 is an individual with a college degree in communication, and a GPA of 3.0 (out of 4.0). He has a background in retail sales, and was briefly employed by a marketing firm, conducting consumer surveys in shopping malls. He took the *Customer Service AP* when applying for a job on the customer service desk in a large store that specialized in products for the home. The job required that he recommend additional products to customers in the course of providing assistance to them.

On the whole, this Individual's test responses suggest that he will do well in a customer service role, and he is a highly recommended applicant. His customer service strengths include those reflected by high or very high scores on the Personal Diplomacy, Extroversion, Patience, and Cooperativeness scales and a Relaxed Style score in the high average range. These scores and additional information from the report indicate that he is highly people-oriented and genuinely interested in being helpful to others. Further, his high Motivation and Achievement scores, along with his educational background, indicate a relatively strong ability to work hard and follow through to achieve work goals. His high Team Player score also suggests that he can work well with others in a group. The average to low Assertiveness and Competitiveness scores indicate that in the work setting he would be comfortable placing the needs of customers ahead of his personal opinions and desires, which is usually an asset in a customer service setting.

The test results include, however, average to low scores in the area of Sales Success, Initiative, and Planning. These results indicate that he may not perform consistently or actively to promote the store's additional products and services. If this candidate were to be hired for the position in question, it should be with the understanding that an effort would need to be made to develop his ability in this area and comfort level with this aspect of his work. This situation is often seen for applicants who are highly recommended for traditional customer service roles. Thus, when an employer does include the requirement to conduct sales-type activities in such roles, some resources should be available to help customer service employees be successful in this aspect of their work. Some related recommendations for the individual in this case example can be found in the Customer Service Achievement Recommendations section at the end of his report.

CUSTOMER SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Customer Service Achievement Recommendations section at the end of the ***Customer Service AP Report*** is designed so that it can be removed from the report and shared with the person who took the test. The recommendations are very straightforward and do not require any special elaboration. You may want to work them into a specific employee development plan that takes into account opportunities that are available within your company or business community. However, you should always go over the recommendations with the individual carefully. Be certain that he or she understands the limitations to certainty associated with computerized test results and the context in which the recommendations are made. Always respect the individual's right to take exception to results printed in the computer report. No part of the report should ever be used in a way that is not respectful, that is not in the best interests of the person who took the test, that is not consistent with the purpose of the test, or that violates a person's confidentiality rights.

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PSYCHOMETRIC BACKGROUND

The technical characteristics of the scores used to generate the **Customer Service AP Report** are fully presented in the *SalesAP Manual*. The fundamental information supporting the use of the test is briefly summarized in this section.

As previously mentioned, the scores are percentile ranks based on the performance of a reference sample of 1,375 individuals, ages 15 and older. The sample included 660 men (48%) and 715 women (52%). Approximately 10% of the sample identified themselves as African American, and 2% as Hispanic. These were people being evaluated for job selection, placement, or promotion, or for career appraisal, using a broad range of tests and interview data. About one third were students and about 15% of the students had been referred because of lower than expected performance.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 display estimates related to the reliability and validity of the scores used to generate the **Customer Service AP Report**. Internal consistency estimates displayed in Table 2 for a subgroup of the reference sample (N = 745) range from .66 to .88, indicating adequate to quite good scale consistency. Also displayed in Table 2 are test-retest reliability estimates for 36 individuals who retook the Customer Service AP an average of 1 year after their first testing. These values range from .67 to .90, well within acceptable psychometrics limits.

The values in Table 3 are correlations between the scale scores used to generate the **Customer Service AP Report** and scores on another test commonly used for personnel selection, the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF; Cattell, 1986). The general pattern of correlations provides evidence that subscales that are supposed to measure similar characteristics are correlated, and subscales that are supposed to measure differing characteristics are not. The Planning scale, for example, is most highly correlated with the 16PF measures of Conscientiousness (G) and Self-Discipline (Q3), and uncorrelated with measures of Imaginativeness (M) and Abstract Thinking (B).

Table 4 displays correlations between the **Customer Service AP Report** scores of 52 job applicants and the performance ratings by their supervisors obtained 2 months after the applicants were hired. (The supervisors rated employee performance and personal characteristics along dimensions similar to those measured by *Customer Service AP* scales.) Again, the numbers support the validity of **Customer Service AP Report** scores in that they follow a general pattern that is consistent with what each subscale is supposed to measure.

TABLE 2. INTERNAL CONSISTENCY AND TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY ESTIMATES FOR THE CUSTOMER SERVICE AP SCORES

	<i>Internal Consistency N = 745</i>	<i>Test-Retest Reliability N = 36</i>
RESPONSE STYLE		
Self-Enhancing (ENH)		.86
Self-Critical (CRT)		.84
SALES SUCCESS		
Sales Disposition (SAL)	.78	.86
Initiative-Cold Calling (CC)	.80	.88
Sales Closing (CL)	.75	.87
MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT		
Achievement (ACH)	.86	.85
Motivation (MOT)	.84	.73
Competitiveness (CMP)	.84	.77
Goal Orientation (GO)	.83	.76
WORK STRENGTHS		
Planning (PLN)	.81	.82
Initiative-General (INI)	.86	.90
Team Player (TMP)	.79	.67
Managerial (MGT)	.87	.73
INTERPERSONAL STRENGTHS		
Assertiveness (AST)	.71	.79
Personal Diplomacy (PDL)	.81	.86
Extroversion (EXT)	.81	.75
Cooperativeness (COP)	.66	.74
INNER RESOURCES		
Relaxed Style (RLX)	.85	.72
Patience (PAT)	.80	.79
Self-Confidence (SCN)	.88	.79

TABLE 3. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN CUSTOMER SERVICE AP SCORES AND 16 PERSONALITY FACTOR QUESTIONNAIRE (16PF) SCORES

Customer Service AP Scores	16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) Scores															
	A	B	C	E	F	G	H	I	L	M	N	O	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SALES SUCCESS																
Sales Disposition (SAL)	.14	-.04	.30	.35	.23	.12	.47	-.13	-.12	.02	-.09	-.34	.09	-.18	.18	-.32
Initiative-Cold Calling (CC)	.12	-.04	.30	.35	.27	.16	.60	-.11	-.05	-.02	-.17	-.31	.08	-.17	.22	-.29
Sales Closing (CL)	.07	-.08	.11	.38	.23	.10	.35	-.15	.15	-.03	-.10	-.16	.15	-.17	.05	-.04
MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT																
Achievement (ACH)	.15	.08	.20	.13	.08	.25	.29	-.01	-.14	.05	-.04	-.32	.03	-.09	.28	-.27
Motivation (MOT)	.05	-.02	.35	.08	.01	.31	.29	-.07	-.27	.02	.02	-.39	-.01	-.12	.41	-.38
Competitiveness (CMP)	.08	-.06	.35	.33	.20	.19	.46	-.14	-.11	.01	-.11	-.38	.08	-.18	.26	-.33
Goal Orientation (GO)	.04	-.08	.44	.12	.10	.20	.33	-.09	-.23	.03	-.04	-.46	-.02	-.08	.37	-.50
WORK STRENGTHS																
Planning (PLN)	.06	.01	.18	.03	-.08	.41	.17	-.08	-.18	-.01	.02	-.21	-.03	.01	.39	-.21
Initiative-General (INI)	.13	-.03	.33	.34	.23	.18	.58	-.14	-.07	.01	-.14	-.36	.08	-.16	.25	-.33
Team Player (TMP)	.09	-.07	.23	.08	.28	.09	.43	.05	-.10	-.08	-.08	-.20	.05	-.26	.18	-.16
Managerial (MGT)	.16	.01	.32	.21	.15	.25	.45	-.09	-.15	.02	-.03	-.39	.04	-.18	.34	-.37
INTERPERSONAL STRENGTHS																
Assertiveness (AST)	.16	-.01	.26	.42	.25	.11	.61	-.05	-.00	.02	-.13	-.28	.14	-.20	.15	-.22
Personal Diplomacy (PDL)	.06	-.01	.32	-.08	.09	.19	.29	.02	-.32	.00	-.04	-.36	-.05	-.13	.34	-.42
Extroversion (EXT)	.16	-.04	.35	.26	.37	.11	.66	-.07	-.15	-.04	-.11	-.30	.09	-.29	.24	-.31
Cooperativeness (COP)	-.07	.07	-.00	-.37	-.25	.05	-.31	.09	-.31	.12	.11	-.05	-.13	.17	.13	-.19
INNER RESOURCES																
Relaxed Style (RLX)	.05	-.04	.48	.22	.09	.14	.33	-.09	-.25	.11	-.05	-.50	.03	-.06	.34	-.52
Patience (PAT)	.00	.09	.25	-.24	-.13	.08	-.06	.02	-.34	.14	.08	-.31	-.05	.07	.24	-.42
Self-Confidence (SCN)	.05	.01	.51	.14	.09	.09	.32	-.12	-.30	.11	-.07	-.53	-.02	-.08	.33	-.58

N = 377

A = Warm, Easygoing; B = Abstract Thinking; C = Calm, Stable; E = Dominant; F = Enthusiastic; G = Conscientious; H = Venturesome; I = Sensitive; L = Suspicious; M = Imaginative; N = Shrewd; O = Self-Doubting; Q1 = Experimenting; Q2 = Self-Sufficient; Q3 = Self-Disciplined; Q4 = Tense, Driven.

TABLE 4. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN JOB APPLICANTS' CUSTOMER SERVICE AP SCORES AND SUPERVISOR RATINGS GIVEN 2 MONTHS AFTER APPLICANTS' HIRE DATES

<i>Job Applicant Customer Service AP Score</i>	SUPERVISOR RATING						
	<i>Overall Sales Performance</i>	<i>Cold Calling</i>	<i>Closing</i>	<i>Achievement</i>	<i>Diplomacy</i>	<i>Organization and Planning</i>	<i>Initiative</i>
SALES SUCCESS							
Sales Disposition (SAL)	.47	.48	.31	.30	.43	.04	.52
Initiative-Cold Calling (CC)	.47	.62	.38	.33	.42	.15	.51
Sales Closing (CL)	.40	.51	.49	.39	.35	.26	.37
MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT							
Achievement (ACH)	.33	.27	.29	.26	.47	.12	.26
Motivation (MOT)	.34	.28	.17	.19	.24	.08	.28
Competitiveness (CMP)	.47	.56	.43	.37	.40	.22	.49
Goal Orientation (GO)	.17	.29	.21	.16	.23	.21	.05
WORK STRENGTHS							
Planning (PLN)	.23	.08	.07	.15	.24	.17	.20
Initiative-General (INI)	.45	.62	.39	.33	.43	.16	.48
Team Player (TMP)	.31	.42	.27	.24	.28	.12	.27
Managerial (MGT)	.37	.35	.34	.23	.39	.13	.35
INTERPERSONAL STRENGTHS							
Assertiveness (AST)	.44	.53	.32	.34	.26	.20	.44
Personal Diplomacy (PDL)	.33	.25	.15	.17	.35	.08	.28
Extroversion (EXT)	.38	.44	.30	.21	.28	.02	.37
Cooperativeness (COP)	-.28	-.46	-.29	-.27	-.12	-.33	-.45
INNER RESOURCES							
Relaxed Style (RLX)	.36	.23	.13	.24	.22	.06	.30
Patience (PAT)	.09	-.11	-.04	.09	.16	-.01	-.04
Self-Confidence (SCN)	.34	.25	.23	.27	.27	.09	.25

N = 52 job applicants and their supervisors.

REFERENCES

- Cattell, R. B. (1986). *The 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF)*. Champaign, IL: Institute for Personality and Ability Testing.
- Friedland, J.G., Marcus, S.I., and Mandel, H.P.(1995). *Sales Achievement Predictor (SalesAP)*. Los Angeles: Western Psychological Services.