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Peetu Aramo

**STUDY ON THE
SALESPERSON
CHARACTERISTICS AS A
PERFORMANCE VARIABLE IN
B2B SALES**

BACHELOR'S THESIS | ABSTRACT

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STUDY ON THE SALESPERSON CHARACTERISTICS AS A PERFORMANCE VARIABLE IN B2B SALES

The purpose of the thesis is to find out characteristics of a top performing salesperson. The study's literature review shows that there are top 10 characteristics found in the top performers: modesty, Conscientiousness, achievement orientation, curiosity, lack of gregariousness, lack of discouragement, lack of self-consciousness, empathy, ego drive and hard-working. Last, there is a literature topic concerning synergistic effect between these different characteristics that improves the performance of a salesperson even more.

A questionnaire method was conducted for data gathering. The questionnaire was designed in a way that all of the ten characteristics had two different questions concerning each one of them, totaling 20 questions. However, it was not possible to send the same questionnaire to the respondents, since the respondents were divided in top performing salespersons, and managers and B2B buyers. The questionnaire was modified to fit for the respondent target group. In the end, two separate questionnaires were conducted to find out perception from top performers minds and from managers and B2B buyers minds concerning top performing salesperson.

The research results shows that nine of the characteristics mentioned before are seen in top performing salesperson's personality trait palet. However, one characteristic was standing out from the group, lack of gregariousness, which means that a person does not like to be in groups or socialize. This characteristic could not be justified through this research. The outcome of the questions concerning this characteristic had different

result and was in conflict with the literature. Also, there were questions concerning the lack of gregariousness that didn't show clear answers, such as agreeing or disagreeing on the topic. The respondents gave out too neutral opinions, so one could not draw conclusion from them. It was not possible to find out whether this characteristic could be found in top performing salesperson's characteristics.

KEYWORDS:

Sales, Characteristic, Top, Performer, B2B, Performance

Peetu Aramo

TUTKIMUS MYYJÄN LUONTEENPIIRTEISTÄ MUUTTUVANA TEKIJÄNÄ SUORITUSKYVYSSÄ B2B MYYNNISSÄ

Opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli selvittää bisnesmyynnin huippusuorituskyvyn omaavan myyjän persoonallisuuden piirteitä. Tutkimuksen kirjallisuuskatsauksesta käy ilmi, että tärkeimpiä persoonallisuuspiirteitä löytyi kymmenen huippusuorituskykyisillä myyjillä: vaatimattomuus, tunnollisuus, saavutus orientoituneisuus, uteliaisuus, gregariteetin puute, itseluottamus, itsetietoisuuden puute, empatia, ego ja ahkeruus. Viimeiseksi, kirjallisuuskatsauksessa on kappale, mikä käsittelee eri persoonallisuuspiirteiden synergististä vaikutusta toisiinsa, joka parantaa myyjän suorituskykyä entisestään.

Tietojen keräämiseen käytettiin kyselylomaketta. Kyselylomake suunniteltiin siten, että kaikilla kymmenellä luonteenpiirteellä oli kaksi eri kysymystä kullekin niistä, yhteensä 20 kysymystä. Samaa kyselylomaketta ei kuitenkaan voitu lähettää vastaajille, koska vastaajat jaettiin huippusuorituskykyisiin myyjiin ja johtajiin ja B2B-ostajiin. Kyselylomake muutettiin vastaamaan vastaajaryhmää. Loppujen lopuksi suoritettiin kaksi erillistä kyselylomaketta, joiden tarkoituksena oli selvittää, minkälaisena huippusuorituskykyiset myyjät näkevät itsensä, ja minkälaisena johtajat ja B2B-ostajat näkevät huippumyyjät.

Tutkimuksen tuloksella oli hyvä vastaajaprosentti. Tulokset olivat samaamieltä, ja täten myös vahvistivat lähes kaikkia persoonallisuuspiirteitä, mitä kirjallisuuskatsauksesta löytyy. Eräs kirjallisuuskatsauksen ominaisuus kuitenkin erottui ryhmästä, gregariteetin puute, mikä tarkoittaa ettei henkilö pidä ryhmässä olemisesta tai sosialisoisesta. jota ei voitu tukea tämän tutkimuksen avulla. Tähän ominaisuuteen liittyvien kysymysten

tulos oli erilainen ja oli ristiriidassa kirjallisuuden kanssa. Lisäksi, gregariteetin puutteesta oli kysymyksiä joista ei saatu selviä vastauksia, kuten sellaisia, kuten sellaisia, että vastaajat eivät olleet samaa eikä erimieltä aiheesta. Vastaajat antoivat liian neutraaleja mielipiteitä, joten niistä ei voitu tehdä johtopäätöksiä. Ei ollut mahdollista selvittää voisiko tämä ominaisuus löytyä huippusuorittavien myyjien luonteenpiirteisiin. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa ei voitu osoittaa yhteyksiä ominaisuuksien synergioista, tämä alue tarvitsee lisää tutkimusta.

ASIASANAT:

Myynti, Luonteenpiirre, Huippu, Suorittaja, B2B, Suorituskyky

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

“If you ask an extremely successful salesperson, “What makes you different from the average sales rep?” you will most likely get a less-than-accurate answer, if any answer at all. Frankly, the person may not even know the real answer because most successful salespeople are simply doing what comes naturally”. (Martin, 2011) What are the requirements to be a top performing salesperson? What personality traits should be focused on? How to be a top performing salesperson?

Defining characteristics of a top performing salesperson is a challenging task and the legitimation behind the statements made from them should be questioned. There are a lot of different characteristics that are described to be the best for a salesperson, but is there a clear list of the most important ones? This study is created to find out answers to questions from the literature created on how to make sales in the most efficient way, and compare with the research conducted by the author.

There are two main motivators for this research. First motivator for this research originates from the author’s future job placement in field of sales. Creating an illustrative research on the characteristics of a great salesperson gives insight on what kind of skills or personality traits should be developed and trained for. This will improve one’s skills in sales competence, hence giving better chances to succeed in goals in the field. Second motivator is to find out connections between the personality traits to illustrate the practicality and importance of these traits. The author hopes to elaborate these main characteristics to this thesis’ reader, so they would be able to use this research in their advantage to improve themselves in field of sales.

1.2 Objective of the thesis and research questions

The purpose of this research, as mentioned before, is to create an illustrative research on the characteristics of a great salesperson to give insight on what kind of skills or personality traits to obtain, in order to improve one's skill-set in sales industry. Author starts to tackle this with research questions: What personality traits are important for a good salesperson? How these traits reinforce each other, if at all?

The objective of this research is to have a clear sense of characteristics which are vital for a successful salesperson to possess. After reading this research, the reader can identify what type of person a successful salesperson is, based on one's personality traits. More importantly, the objective is to give the author an insight which personality traits gives the edge to salespeople to make effective sales.

2 DEFINITIONS

2.1 B2B Sales

B2B sales is an abbreviation from words business to business sales. B2B sales is exactly what it sounds like, selling to other businesses instead of consumers. This is the reason why B2B sales are seldom more complex than B2C (Business to Consumer) sales. One is trying to sell himself and the company to professional buyers, who's job is to deal with sales activities daily. In addition, the sales activity involves greater sums of money in B2B sales. The bigger the deal, the longer decision making process will get, because the corporate probably needs confirmations and approvals from departments responsible for decisions. This brings more people and extra steps in to the process. (Connick, n.d.)

There are two general types of B2B sales. The first one is selling products that meets businesses needs. Examples of these needs could be office supplies or computer equipment. The sales process is usually quite similar to B2C in this type of activity, only difference is extra steps involved because of the bureaucracy. (Connick, n.d.)

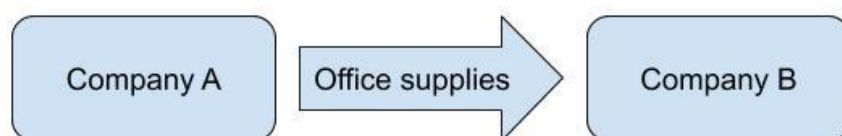


Figure 1. B2B sales type 1.

The second type of B2B sales is selling to businesses in sense of supplier. You could use automobile business as an example. One company sells the tires to the cars another business is manufacturing. After this, the manufacturer brings all parts together to the final product and selling their product forward to a car dealership or straight to the end-customer. (Connick, n.d.)

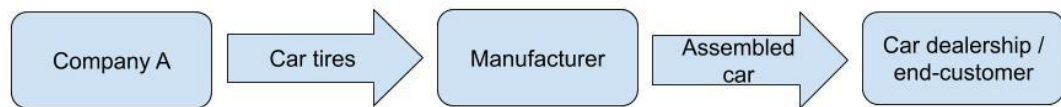


Figure 2. B2B sales type 2.

Connick ties the topic up, “B2B sales is generally perceived as being more challenging than B2C sales, and it frequently involves products and services that cost far more. As a result, B2B sales positions often pay better than their B2C equivalents -- both because the salaries are higher and because such large individual sales naturally yield higher commissions.” (Connick, n.d.)

2.2 Characteristics

A characteristic is a quality or a feature of someone or something that makes them or it recognizable, or this feature or quality is typical of them or it. In short, something that differentiates someone/something from others. There are different ways of seeing a characteristic in a person for example. There are human characteristics, which could be the high volume of a person’s speech for example. Next, there could be a physical characteristic of a person which could be an abnormal size of a persons head. You could also see a national characteristic in a person, which is typical of a people of a country for example, being right on time is a Finnish national characteristic. (Longman, n.d.)

However, in this thesis, personal characteristics are being discussed. Personal characteristics are features which relates to individuals personality, what kind of a person is the salesman. For example, these different kind of features or personality traits could be connected to being a leader. Do you need to be kind, easily frustrated or a happy person in order to be a great leader? All of these are considered being a persons characteristics. (Longman, n.d.)

2.3 Salesperson performance

A top performing sales person is managing to bring in home more successful deals than lower level performers in sales. Mike Schultz, President of RAIN Group conducted a research with his company. Through this research he tried to find a definition for top performing sales people/organization. He found out results for his study that are stated in the appendix that follows.

	Elite Performers top 7% of respondents	Top Performers top 20% of respondents	The Rest
Average Proposal Win Rate	50% or greater	40% or greater	Those who didn't meet the Elite or Top Performer criteria
Annual Revenue and Profitability	Increase year-to-year	N/A	
Organization Annual Sales Goal	Met	Same as Elite	
Organization Annual Sales Goal	Challenging <i>(Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral)</i>	Same as Elite	
Pricing Strategy	Maximum prices in line with the value provided <i>(Strongly Agree/Agree)</i>	Maximum prices in line with the value provided <i>(Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral)</i>	

Table 1. Top performing salesperson definition (Schultz;Doerr;& Flaherty n.d.).

“For this report we surveyed 472 sellers and executives, representing companies with sales forces ranging from 10 to 5,000-plus sellers. Respondents were located in the Americas, EMEA, and AsiaPacific, and represented 26 industries” (Schultz;Doerr;& Flaherty, n.d.). The criteria they consider to be a top performer is to meet annual sales goals, having high win rates, being able to get maximum prices from deals and feeling that all set goals are challenging. Only 20% of the respondents of the study were considered as top performing salespeople. Out of these 20% there was 7% of elite performers. The following chapter will be discussing about the top characteristics that these top performers possess. (Schultz;Doerr;& Flaherty, n.d.)

3 CHARACTERISTICS OF A TOP PERFORMING SALESPERSON

In this chapter, the top characteristics are analyzed which according to literature are found out to be the most important for successful salespeople. The characteristics are justified by different sources, so the outcome would be more trustworthy.

3.1 Top performing salesperson characteristics

Steve W. Martin conducted a research on salespeople concerning their characteristics. In his article he told how he interviewed thousand business-to-business salespeople to find out the most important characteristics for a successful salesperson. Simply by asking, “What makes you different from the average sales representative?” from a successful salesperson is not going to cut it. He stated that if you ask this, you would not get a clear answer, or you might not even get an answer at all. They may not even know what makes them special, since the skill to be successful salesperson comes naturally from them. (Martin, 2011)

Martin’s research findings indicate that the traits top performers possess influences directly in to their selling style, hence giving them an opportunity to become successful. The results were compared with top performers and average and below average performers to find out characteristics that divides them. Whether having the same educational background or having same level of eagerness for work do not determine the total quality of work results. He found out that the characteristics and personality of a salesperson increases their success chance critically. (Martin, 2011)

3.1.1 Modesty

91 percent of the top performers had high level of modesty and humility. It is quite the opposite to the stereotypes of salespeople that are pushy and use aggressive selling style. The results also tell that provocative salespeople tend to push more customers away than they manage to win over. (Martin, 2011)

Bill Zipp writes on his website that humility has three different ways of affecting the outcome of your sales. First, there is humility in client and prospect interactions. Invention of the internet has changed the sales interaction between a buyer and a seller completely. Nowadays a buyer can gain knowledge about the price range of the products they are planning to buy from the internet. This gives them a whole new kind of edge, since the price and product information are not a corporation secrets completely anymore. (Zipp, n.d.)

A wise salesperson could use this as an advantage, but it requires certain amount of humility to do so. Instead of being defensive on how the prospect knows so much about you, your industry and your competition, a wise salesperson listens and humbly corrects if the information given is correct or missing something. This way, humility gives assistance to become a guide to your prospect, not a threatful, aggressive salesperson who tries to prove that your knowledge is not as good as his on this matter. Humility grants one the opportunity to guide your prospect to the right choice, not just overloading the prospect with your choice from your knowledge of their needs. “The humble salesperson views themselves as a peer to the buyer, not higher than they are nor lower, but an equal, a trusted advisor whose job it is to help that buyer make the best decision for their business.” (Zipp, n.d.)

Second, there is humility in understanding that products and services one offers might not be perfect. Zipp says that there is no perfect service, so admitting that one’s is not either, might not be as bad as it sounds. Understanding products’ and services’ downsides makes one able to explain them to the clients. This positions one as a peer to the buyer and makes him put more trust in cooperative decision making. It might also bring up objections from a client that he is withholding out of sheer politeness. (Zipp, n.d.)

Third, humility towards your co-workers. The sales work does not only happen towards the customers, but also inside the company. Requesting information inside the company or implementing your deals is a part of sales job. In this light, the humility comes in on being humble towards your coworkers. This makes the companys internal clockwork

run smoother. If forgotten, your deals might take a while to be implemented, your information requests might get lost or your mistakes that you might make, will be reported to your peers. A salesperson is an important part of the organization, but there are many as equally important peers. Using humility in your favor will bring value to the company and increase to sales results. (Zipp, n.d.)

3.1.2 Conscientiousness

85 percent of the top performers tended to have high level of conscientiousness, which implicates that they take their job seriously, and they feel responsible to gain great results with their jobs. Conscientiousness of the top performers impacts their selling style by making them take control and command of their sales process. (Martin, 2011)

Based on over 35 years of data gathered by Self Management Group, John Marshall writes that their data reveals conscientiousness to be one of the top characteristic to possess as an top performing salesperson. “Competitive sales often relies on the salesperson to initiate the sales process, it requires self managers who will go after the opportunities and complete the tasks needed to close the sale.” (Marshall, 2015). Self managers tend to focus their daily energy resources to the right tasks in order to achieve certain goals. This is an instinct they are using without even thinking about it. This makes them more efficient and successful than their peers without this kind of conscientiousness characteristic. (Marshall, 2015)

3.1.3 Achievement Orientation

84 percent of the top performers showed high levels of achievement orientation in the results. They have a clear goal to achieve, and they keep comparing their level of work to their goals. This drives them to succeed even more than the average and below average performers. (Martin, 2011)

John Marshall’s SelfManagementGroup data shows that achievement orientation is also one of the most important characteristic to own if you want to be top performing salesperson. The energy and sense of urgency levels are high when you are achievement

orientated. This trait gives you the capability to be more effective deal closer compared to casual / medium sales performers. They also tend to have good balance between their motivation by people service/recognition and money/challenge, an ideal combination when you want to find most of your deals to be win/win situations without sacrificing client needs or sales goals. Furthermore, To be a top performer in a business environment which requires fast action with quick results and fast deal closing, it calls for achievement orientation possessing salesperson. (Marshall, 2015)

3.1.4 Curiosity

82 percent of the top performers had really high level of curiosity. The curiosity, or in other words, the desire to gain more knowledge and information becomes naturally to the top performers. Curiosity was not an obvious trait for the lesser performers. This indicates in to a difference in their selling style, such as activity during sales calls for example. Top performers can be more eager to close a deal with more enthusiasm and by asking more uncomfortable questions, since they have a burning hunger to know whether they are going to win the business or not. (Martin, 2011)

The top performers are naturally more curious about their activity. Curiosity in the top salespeople creates an urge to learn more about their products/services or their own sales process. It can be described to be the hunger for knowledge, hence being great for any sales job in any field. (Metler, 2017)

3.1.5 Lack of Gregariousness

Martin says that one of the most surprising difference in the results was the lack of gregariousness. The top performers had around 30 percent lower gregariousness than the below average performers, which implicates in their capability to dominate the customer in a business deal. This gives the top performers the upper hand in a deal since they tend to be more dominant than others. The test results show that establishing dominance can be difficult for those who have higher level of gregariousness, which could lead in to worse results in sales. (Martin, 2011)

There were no any other literature created on it to be easily found. Martin was the only one who had done an observation on how top performers tend to find themselves alone and being okay with it or even work better that way. Hence, the research could not be compared to any other literature This is a good opportunity to find out on this research, whether the questionnaire answers outcome fortify Martin's findings or not.

3.1.6 Lack of Discouragement

90 percent of the performers were categorized in experiencing just occasional sadness. Only 10 percent were told to have high level in discouragement and feeling high levels of sadness frequently. Martin thinks that there is a connection between high school sports and top level performing. He found out that nearly all of the top performers played organized sports in high school, which reflects in to the sales job in present. He thinks that it might have taught them to rebound from losses more effectively and to be more mentally prepared for next opportunities to come. (Martin, 2011)

Salespeople face failures in deals all the time, they do not always succeed in bringing the sale to a close. This could be a cause of discouragement and leading to lack of motivation. Top salespeople can shrug their present failures off of them and do not let it affect their future performance. (Metler, 2017)

3.1.7 Lack of Self-Consciousness

“Self-consciousness is the measurement of how easily someone is embarrassed. The byproduct of a high level of self-consciousness is bashfulness and inhibition. Less than five percent of top performers had high levels of self-consciousness.” (Martin, 2011). This trait helps the salespeople to fight for their cause. Trying to obtain new contacts or making new deals is easier for people who have lower self-consciousness because they are not afraid of embarrassing themselves. Dealing with annoying and stressful customers is not so big of a task for salespeople who possesses this kind of characteristic. (Martin, 2011)

This characteristic is in conflict with many other sources found, for example online. Martin states that the less than five percent of the top performers in his research showed high levels of self-consciousness. This indicates that they have low propability to embarrass themselves easily which makes their sales process easier to handle mentally. (Martin, 2011)

Many other sources states that a good salesperson should own high level of good self-consciousness in order to succeed. For example, Dan Ross from Salesforce tells that they have coaching culture at Salesforce. He claims that salespeople with high levels of self-consciousness can identify their weak points quickly and are able to start improving themselves from the right aspect. In addition, the most self-conscious salespeople are more deliberate with success and they have the knowledge on how to repeate it. (Ross, n.d.)

Other example of a source which is in conflict with Martin's research is created by Anis Qizilbash. "The importance of self-awareness while selling and influencing can't be can't be [sic] overstated" (Qizilbash, n.d.). Qizilbash approached the lack of self-consciousness from a different aspect. She says that without self-consciousness a person will have "blindspots". By that she means that a person might think in another way, but actually acting in another. This will have an effect on their social interaction with others. (Qizilbash, n.d.)

Ross and Qizilbash both think that self-consciousness is important for salespeople, but Martin's research clearly shows otherwise. In the research, it is important to find out how high level of self-consciousness affects the salesprocess for salespeople, does it make the work harder or easier.

3.1.8 Empathy

In 2006 David Mayer and Herbert M. Greenberg wrote an article on Harvard Business Review about characteristics of good salesperson. They conducted a research and created a theory that a good salesman should at least possess two qualities: empathy and ego drive. (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006) These two characteristics can also be found in Martin's work previously in this chapter. This indicates, according to the literature the

author has been studying, these two characteristics are necessary for top performing salespeople. Mayer and Greenberg go more in to detail in these two personality traits by describing them in metaphors and explaining how they effect in the sales action.

First one, Empathy. Empathy means the ability to feel people's emotions. It does not directly mean that that a salesperson should be sympathetic. One just must be on the same level with other person's emotions in order to understand how they feel, not to agree with the feeling. Mayer and Greenberg described salesperson's bad and good empathy levels in an antiaircraft weapon metaphor: "A parallel might be drawn in this connection between the old antiaircraft weapons and the new heat-attracted missiles. With the old type of ballistic weapon, the gunner would take aim at an airplane, correcting as best he could for windage and driftage, and then fire. If the shell missed by just a few inches because of a slight error in calculation or because the plane took evasive action, the miss might just as well have been by hundreds of yards for all the good it did." (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006). This metaphor is from a low level of empathy possessing salesperson. Their actions are based on predictions of the target. If the predicted action of the target changes while doing the sale, the salesperson does not know how to correct his performance in to one with succeeding ending, hence he misses the sale. (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006)

On the contrary, the missiles with new technology illustrates salespeople with good empathy skill. Regardless of the change in action of the target, the heat seeking missiles knows how to correct its path leading in to the target. A salesperson with a high level of empathy knows how to adjust his actions and reactions in sensible way in order to close the deal in the most efficient way possible. He is not attached in to the sales process that has been learned before the sales, but he knows when to detach from the original plan and try something else whether the situation needs it or not. He functions in the interaction between the customer and him, not the prepared sales process. (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006)

3.1.9 Ego drive

This ego drive makes the salesperson feel the urge to conquer, achieve his goals. Salespeople with this trait does not just do the sales job for the money, they also do it for pleasure, fulfilling their personal needs. Egoistic way of thinking in sales industry creates opportunities for the salespeople. Providing boost in their ego when succeeding in a sale improves their self-image, which then boosts their courage and confidence. This domino effect of emotions and feeling of power creates the drive which increases their performance. (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006)

On the other hand, the reduction of ego happens even more than it increases. The nature of selling ensures that the salesperson is going to fail more sales the he is going to succeed in. It's just how the sales industry is. Therefore, salespeople need to possess a huge ego drive in order to push through all the failed sales. The failure should work as a reminder that with success, he will gain the ego enchantment he needs. "The salesman's empathy, coupled with his intense ego drive, enables him to home in on the target effectively and make the sale. He has the drive, the need to make the sale, and his empathy gives him the connecting tool with which to do it." (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006).

3.1.10 Hard-working

"You do not get to be a good salesperson in one night." Says the former CEO of Finnish realestate agency Kiinteistömaailma, Paavo Aunola. He had been recruiting new salespeople for around 25 years and during these years, he learned one or two things about good salespeople. He says there are many different kind of salespeople with different personality traits. Not all of them succeed in the highest level, but they do manage. He hopes that one could foresee a good salesperson from the first contact, but the process of finding out whether the salesperson is good or not could be as long as two years. One thing he says for sure from all of the well succeeding salespeople: They are hard working. "All of our high level succeeding salespeople are hard working. A good salesperson does not survive with little. He meets a lot of people and sustains customer

relations. A good salesperson makes the customer make a decision.”. He also states that sustaining a good salesperson takes effort from the company itself. They need to give support and right conditions for success. (Talouselämä, 2005)

Being an enthusiastic self-starter and trying to exceed the customers expectations constantly is recognized as a top sales performer trait. In addition, their focus is on the customer, because they know that key customers helps them to see what drives them and how they make buying decisions. Top performers tend to get to know the customers on professional and personal level, and are looking for new opportunities continuously. (Sales Effectiveness, Inc., n.d.)

3.2 Synergistic effect of characteristics

A great example of synergy between the characteristics is the connection between empathy (chapter 1.8) and ego drive (chapter 1.9). Mayer and Greenberg states that the two characteristics are two different dynamic factors, since one could possess high level of empathy but no ego drive at all. This also works vice versa, Extremely high level of ego drive but low level of empathy. These kinds of combinations do not work together efficiently. (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006)

A salesperson with extremely high level of ego drive but lacking the empathy uses the ego drive to push to the customer using pure knowledge. His ego drive makes him to fully utilize any empathy skill he possesses. Trying to make a sale through this kind of process could go wrong in many ways, such as the salesperson not grasping the tension between him and the customer and scaring the customer off from the deal. On the contrary, the salesperson with low level of ego drive but high level of empathy is not likely to use his empathy in a persuasive way to seduce the customer in to making a deal. Even though the salesperson perfectly well knows that certain kind of sentences could possibly seal the deal, he might not do that. Empathy side of him makes him to root for the customers feelings, since he does not have ego drive to push him in to making a sure deal. He does not have any urge to complete the deal to gain any kind of personal glory or ego boost. A salesperson completely without these two traits, empathy and ego drive, shouldn't even be a in the industry. They are not competent in sales

without the traits, but still a lot of people in the industry fall in to these specific features. (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006)

“It takes a combination of the two, each working to reinforce the other—each enabling the other to be fully utilized—to make the successful salesman.” (Mayer & Greenberg, 2006). Finding a balance between these two traits enables one to create a perfect “dynamic-duo” of skills. This study implicates to the importance of combining effect of personality traits. So, it would be safe to say that the characteristics in themselves are not the only thing to look for in a great salesperson, but also the combination of the characteristics that makes the person skilled in the industry.

Another example of synergistic effect of characteristics is the combination of achievement orientation (3.3) and conscientiousness (3.2), or in detail, self management. John Marshall described self management to be the most important characteristic to possess. This is not only because of the perks this characteristic brings to a salesperson, but also the fact that it enables other characteristics to work. John describes achievement orientation to be an a dimmer switch, having high level of achievement orientation means that the dimmer is set on high. When level of achievement orientation is low it means that the dimmer is set on low. However, when describing self management as a dimmer switch, when you have self management the dimmer is swithed on. When you don't have self management, your dimmer is switched completely off. (Marshall, 2015) “The key here is that without self management, it doesn't matter how high the dimmer switch is set – it's not on. That's why self management is the most important characteristic to select for” (Marshall, 2015).

4 METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research method is chosen for this study. A questionnaire is conducted and the questionnaire contains questions that builds on top of the personality traits Found by Martin (2011). Even though the research itself is an exploratory research in nature, conducting a questionnaire is still suitable method of data collection. Through the questionnaire it is possible to gather data on the characteristics of a salespeople target group. The questionnaire provides information on the characteristics those of salespeople possess, and their possible opinions on such characteristics.

The target group used for the study is carefully chosen salespersonnel from a company called OEM Automatic. OEM international is Swedish multinational company in the field of electronics and automation, OEM Automatic is an operative company in Finnish markets. OEM's Finnish operations are divided in two sub business units: OEM Automatic and OEM Electronics.

The questionnaire is distributed to salespeople in the department. Head of sales gives help in picking the target group in cable sales unit of OEM Automatic. This way the target group will have only the type of people the research conductor desires. The criteria to be a chosen person in the target group is to be a top performer in sales. The head of sales in cable sales unit will be choosing which sales people are the ones who are performing as follows: meets annual sales goals, has high win rates, is able to get maximum prices from deals and feel that all set goals are challenging.

The questionnaire is also distributed to managers of the case company. This gives less risks of biased data related to salespeople characteristics. In addition, the questionnaire is handed to customers in B2B sales relations. This gives a complementary aspect on the top performer characteristics.

5 ANALYSIS

We can provide information on the response rate. 17 salespersons managed to answer to the questionnaire out of 26 salespersons (65.4%). 23 of managers and B2B buyers answered out of 28 (82.1%). Total amount of the respondent count is 40 and that is a good basis for analysis.

The questionnaire itself is designed in a way that every of the 10 characteristics are included in the questionnaire and have two questions concerning each of the characteristics. The research is divided in two different questionnaires, one for salespersons and one for managers and B2B buyers. The two questionnaires' data is analyzed separately, thus giving insight from salespersons and managers and buyers.

Modesty

1. Top performing salesperson is a humble person.

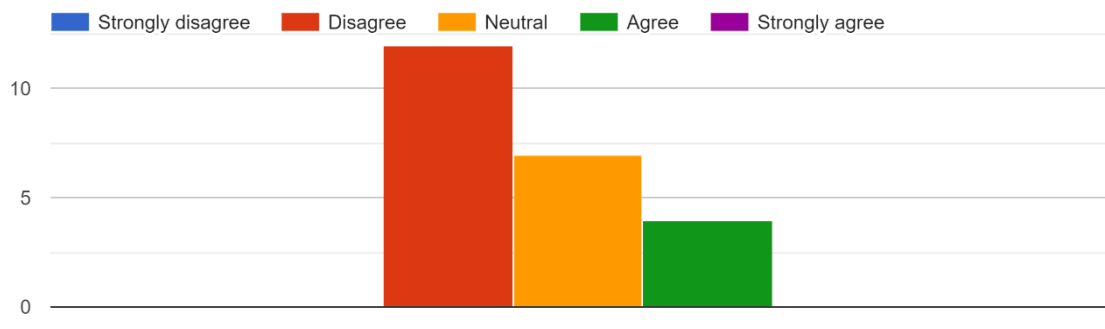


Figure 3. Manager and B2B buyer Q1.

The study's question 1 tells that majority of managers and B2B buyers think that top performing salesperson is not a humble person, even though in the literature chapter (3.1) Martin's study shows that 91 percent of top performers possess a high level of modesty and humility. The study only reinforces the stereotypical claim that salespeople

tend to be pushy and aggressive. The question itself is designed to gather data for the level of humility which gives data that supports the literature.

11. Top performing salesperson brags with his big achievements.

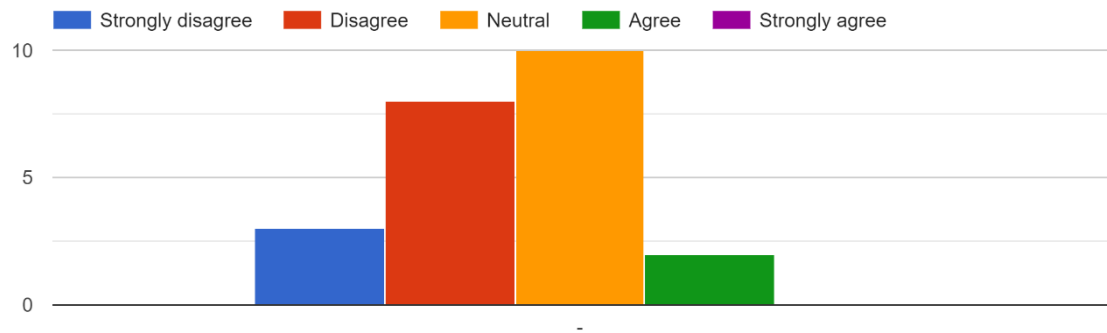


Figure 4. Manager and B2B buyer Q11.

The second question concerning humility and modesty has a clear division on the weight of answers. Nearly all of the respondents who had an opinion on this think that a top performing salesperson does not brag with his big achievements. This shows a level of humility that is perceived in salespeople, and connects with what is shown in the literature chapter (3.1). However, this is in conflict with the other question concerning humility and modesty, where the respondents thought that top performer is not a humble person.

1. I am a humble person.

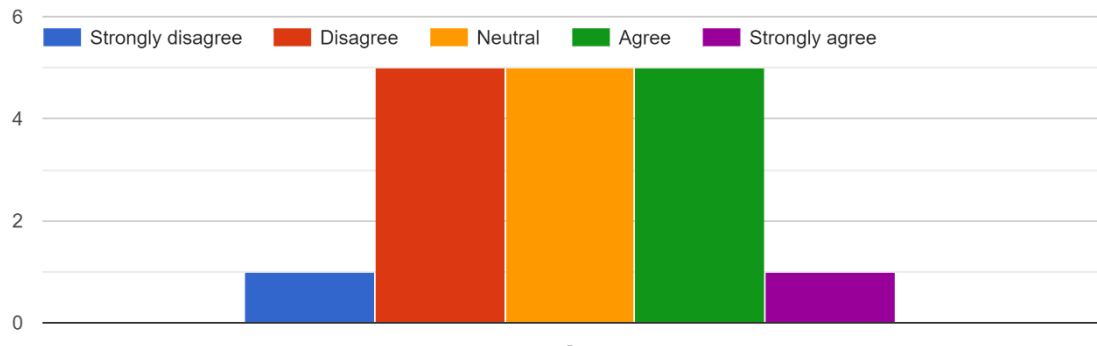


Figure 5. Salesperson Q1.

However, in questionnaire for salespersons, it shows that the answers has been divided perfectly on both sides. Half of OEM's top performing salespersons think that they are humble and half of them don't. This data only shows that there are humble salespersons among the top performers but only as much as the not humble ones. Hence, it is not possible to conclude from this whether the result reinforce the literature or not.

11. I like to brag with my big achievements.

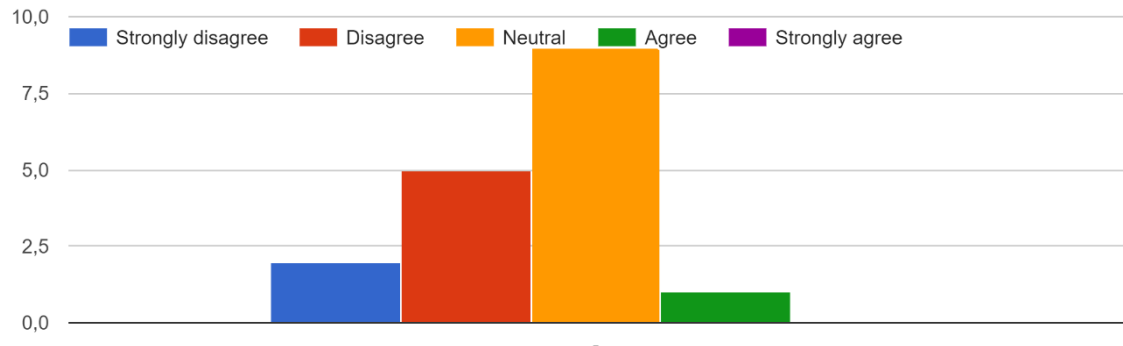


Figure 6. Salesperson Q11.

The salespeople were quite neutral in this question. Either way, the respondents who gave other answer than neutral, felt like they do not like to brag with the achievements they've reached, which shows humility in them. This result reinforces the literature's statements on humility levels on top performers.

Two out of four questions concerning modesty answered by salespeople, managers and buyers showed support to the literature. However, the literature states that the top performers are humble in nature. This finding was not supported when it was asked from managers and buyers. They agreed with the stereotypical claim, that a top performer is not a humble person in the eyes of a manager or a buyer (3.1). In addition, The humility question for salespersons (Figure 5. Salesperson Q1.) showed inconclusive result, caused by too divided answers on both, agreeing and disagreeing sides.

Conscientiousness

2. Top performing salesperson always finishes their given tasks with precision from beginning to the end.

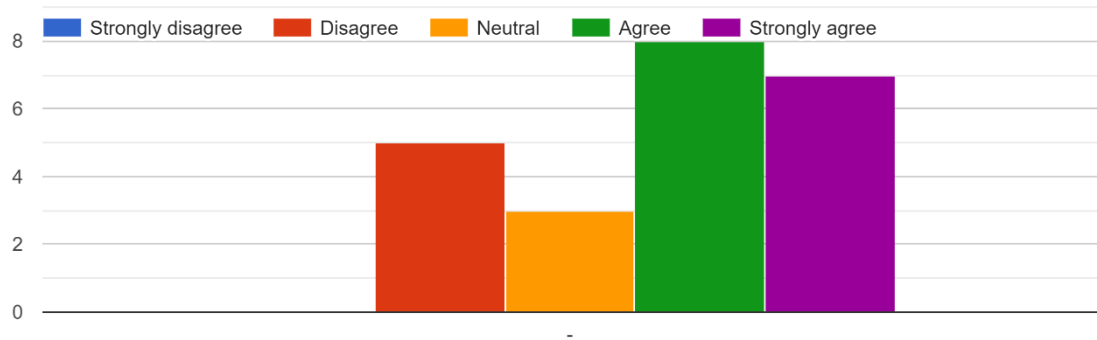


Figure 7. Manager and B2B buyer Q2.

The respondents gave out quite a strong opinion on top performers task orientation. Their responses match with the literature's data (3.2) which tells that 85 percent of top performers are showing high levels of conscientiousness. They think that top performers are fixated on always bringing their given tasks to the end with precision.

12. Top performing salesperson tends to be well self-organized person.

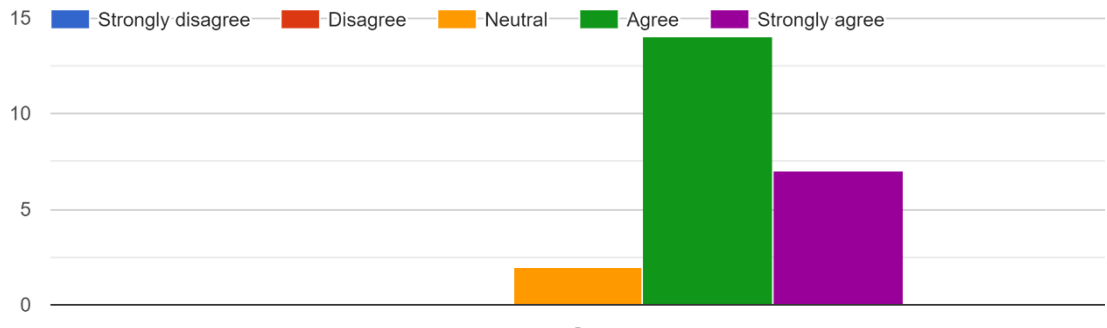


Figure 8. Manager and B2B buyer Q12.

Managers and B2B buyers' answers give clear statistics that top performers are indeed very well self-organized people. This data supports the findings of the literature, that a top performing salesperson is well self-organized.

2. When I start something, I feel the need to finish the job well and thoroughly.

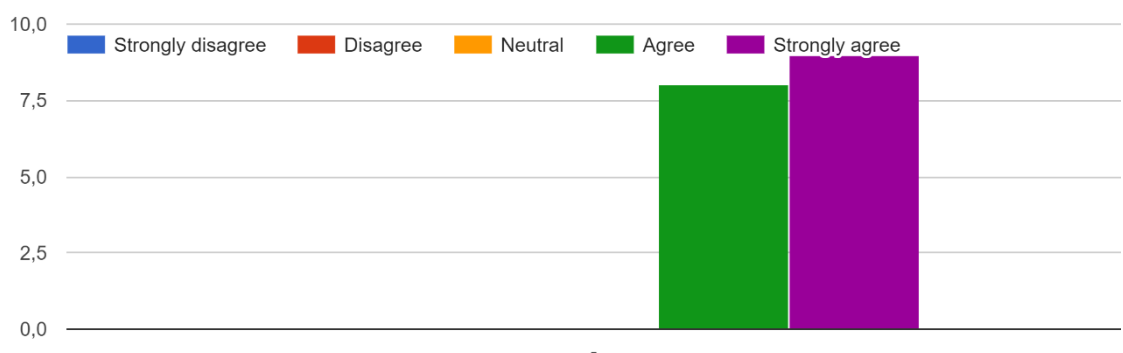


Figure 9. Salesperson Q2.

The target top performers are agreeing with the managers' and B2B buyers' opinions on their task fixation. Every single one of the respondents feel the need to finish their tasks well and thoroughly till the end. They are like the literature (3.2) says they are supposed be, very conscientious people.

12. I like to organize my personal activities properly.

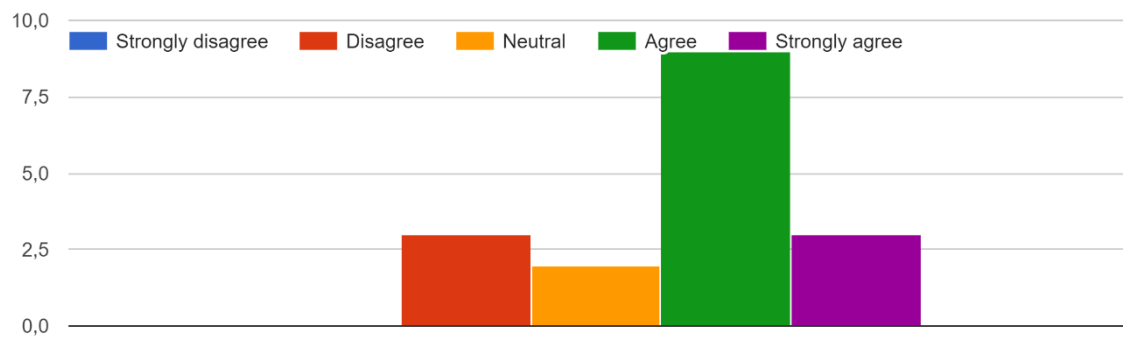


Figure 10. Salesperson Q12.

This question reinforces the answer of the previous one (Salesperson Q2.). The task orientation requires good self-organizing and the research shows that nearly all of the respondents tend to be well self-organized. Also this result supports the literature data that a top performing sales person is well self-organized person.

These results of conscientiousness research show strong support to the literature. All of the questions concerning conscientiousness got very dominant answers on the same opinion among all of the respondents.

Achievement orientation

3. Top performing salesperson sets themselves goals weekly.

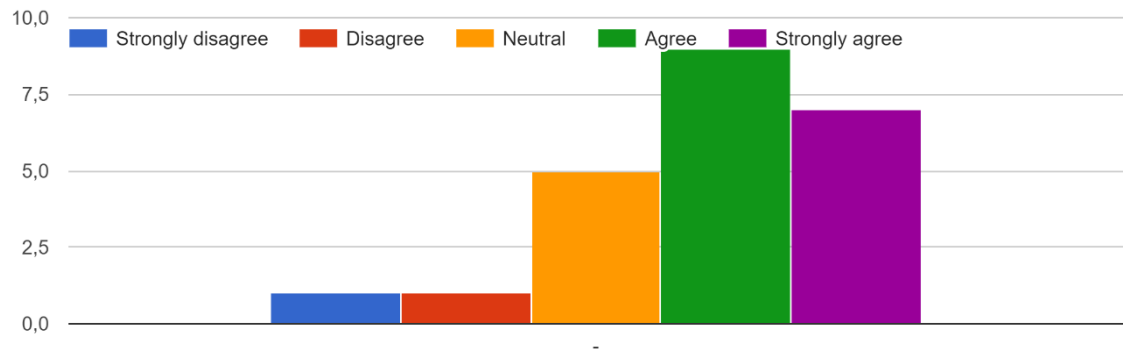


Figure 11. Manager and B2B buyer Q3.

The respondents dominantly agree with the fact that top performers sets themselves goals weekly. This indicates that they think top performers set themselves goals weekly, thus making the top performers achievement oriented. Like said in the literature (3.3) it drives the top performers to succeed more than the average performers.

13. Achieving personal goals is important for a top performing salesperson.

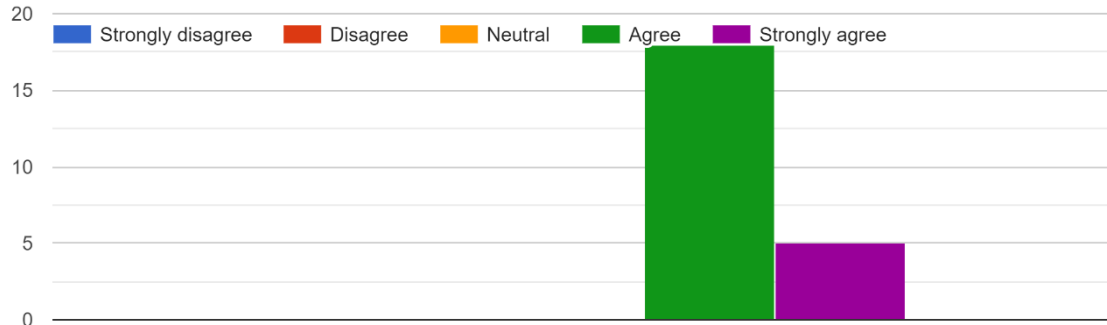


Figure 12. Manager and B2B buyer Q13.

The other question concerning the achievement orientation is designed to verify the importance of achieving personal goals for top performers. The results show that a top performing salesperson finds achieving personal goals important is indeed very important in mind of a manager and B2B buyer. The questions result reinforces the literature's statements (3.3) on top performing people that 84 percent of them are highly oriented to reach their goals, thus making them achievement oriented.

3. I set goals for myself often.

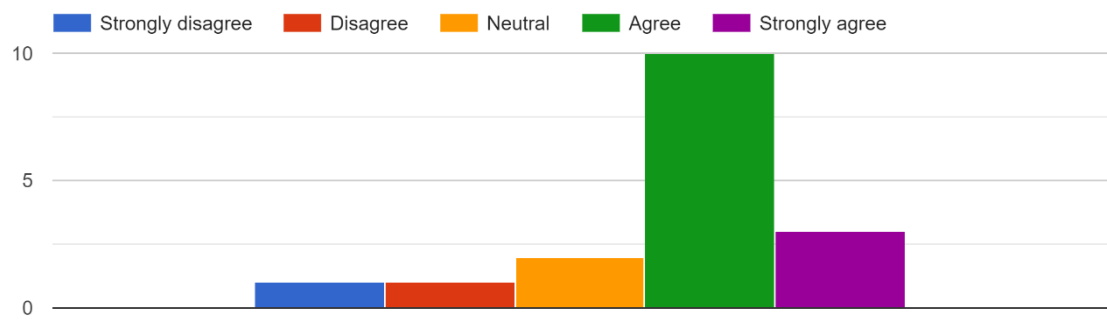


Figure 13. Salesperson Q3.

Top performing salespersons agreed with the managers and B2B buyers opinions on the fact that they set themselves goals often. Nearly all of the top performers agreed with this fact. This result supports the literature findings. In the chapter 3.3 is stated that 84 percent of the top performers are supposed to show high levels of achievement orientation, which is shown in this statistic clearly.

13. Achieving my goals is important.

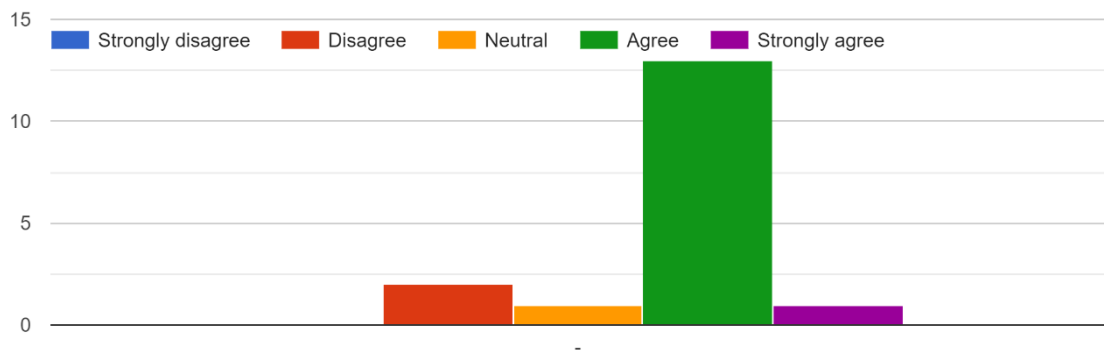


Figure 14. Salesperson Q13.

The literature findings (3.3) tells that setting achievements is important for a top performer, but not only setting the goals is important. Other important part of achievement orientation is actually achieving the goals. Once again, the respondents agreed that achieving their goals is important for them. This clearly states that they have a characteristic of achievement orientation in them. This question is quite straight forward connected to the literature, trying to find out whether the top performers are achievement oriented in nature or not. The result reinforces Martin's (2011) findings that a top performing sales person is achievement oriented.

Results from these questions strongly reinforces the findings of achievement orientation literature. Nearly unanimous responses indicate that the top performers, buyers and managers think that the top performers set themselves goals and find it important to reach these set goals.

Curiosity

4. Top performing salesperson tries to gain more knowledge on their field of work constantly.

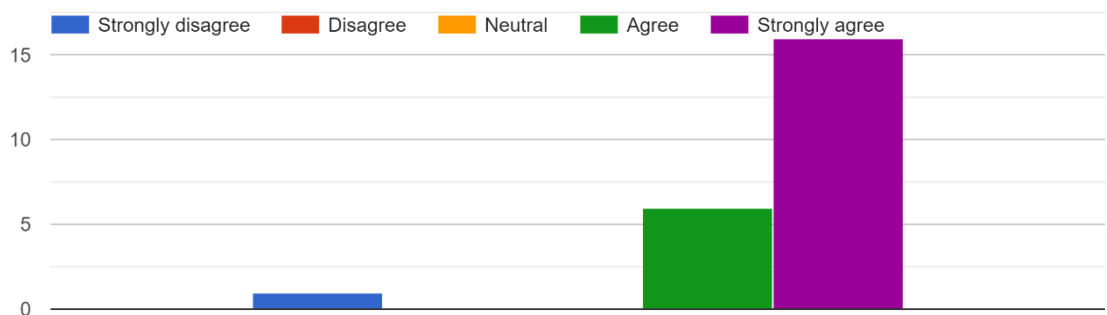


Figure 15. Manager and B2B buyer Q4.

This research question concerns the top performers curiosity level. The respondents think that top performer is constantly looking for more knowledge on their field of work, which makes them curious. According to Martin (2011), 82 percent of the top performers do show really high level of curiosity. This validates the outcome of this research question and reinforces the study further more.

14. Top performing salesperson asks a lot of questions.

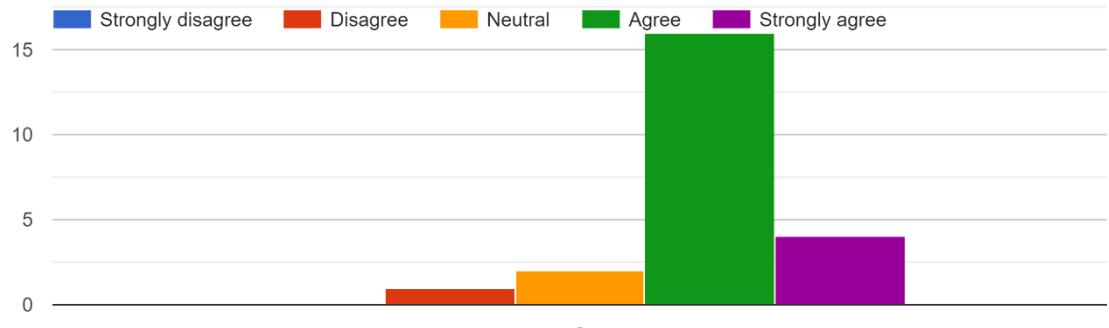


Figure 16. Manager and B2B buyer Q14.

Respondents one sided opinion on the topic that top performers ask a lot of questions leans on the agreeing side. This goes side by side with Martin's (2011) research of curiosity. They think that top performers ask a lot of questions and so does Martin (2011). The question itself is quite self explanatory in nature, since asking a lot of questions makes a person curious, hence the existence of this question.

4. I want to gain more knowledge on my field of work.

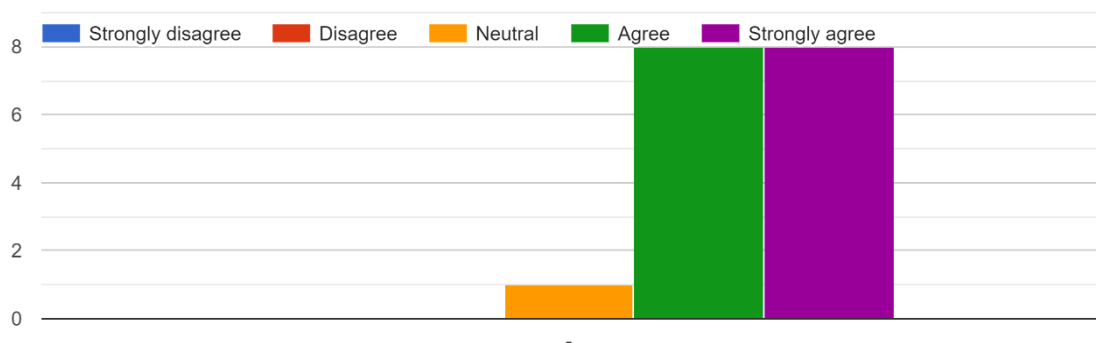


Figure 17. Salesperson Q4.

The top performers answered completely one sided on their opinion of gaining knowledge on their field of work. They agreed with the question on gaining knowledge, which implicates that the literature of this research reinforces the outcome. The respondents were either agreeing or strongly agreeing, divided perfectly. It tells that the literature (3.4) is correct with statements on the high levels of curiosity on top performers.

14. I ask a lot of questions.

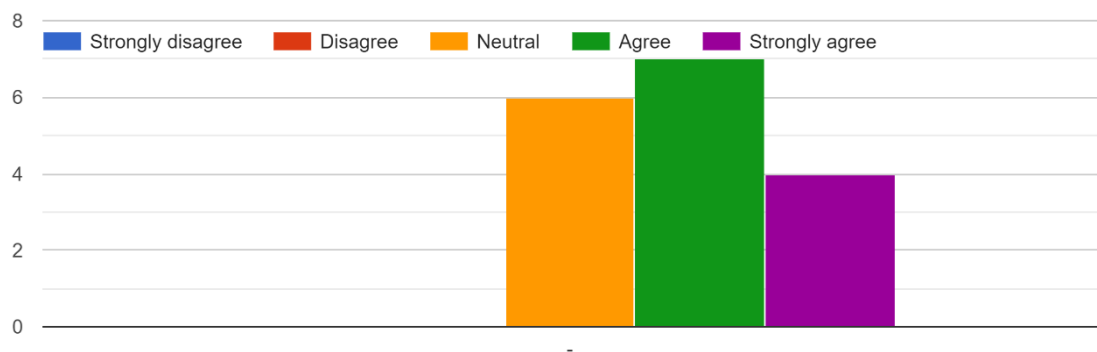


Figure 18. Salesperson Q14.

Top performers also ask a lot of questions naturally, whether it is concerning their knowledge gathering from their field of work or not. Not single respondent answered negatively on the question “I ask a lot of questions” which implicates the curiosity in top performers, as stated by Martin (2011): “The top performers are naturally more curious about their activity”.

Research findings on curiosity show strong support to the literature. Dominant amount of respondents think alike with the literature statements that a top performer is asking a lot of questions and trying to constantly gain new knowledge from their field of work.

Lack of gregariousness

5. Top performing salesperson enjoys working alone more than in a group.

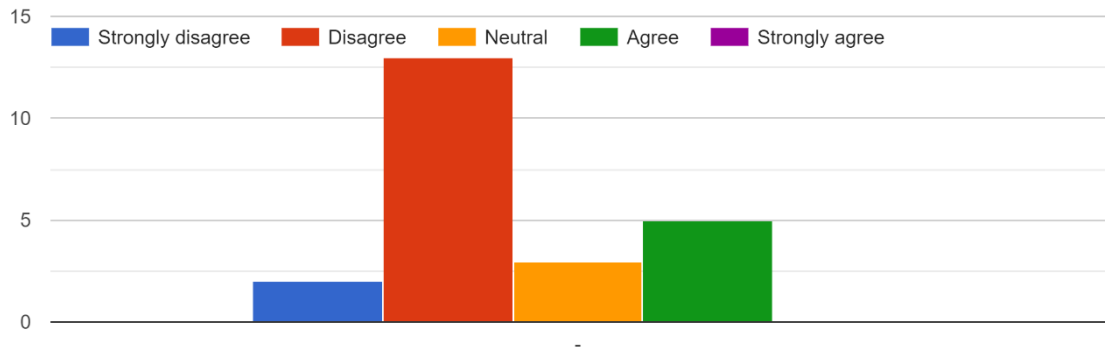


Figure 19. Manager and B2B buyer Q5.

Managers and buyers did not feel like top performers enjoy working alone more than in a group of people. This data is in conflict with Martin's (2011) research. However, the literature of this topic is validated by only one author. Through the questionnaire conducted, it is safe to say that managers and buyers perception on the fact that the top performers are "lone-wolves" is head to head with the literature.

15. Top performing salesperson would be more productive in a group than alone.

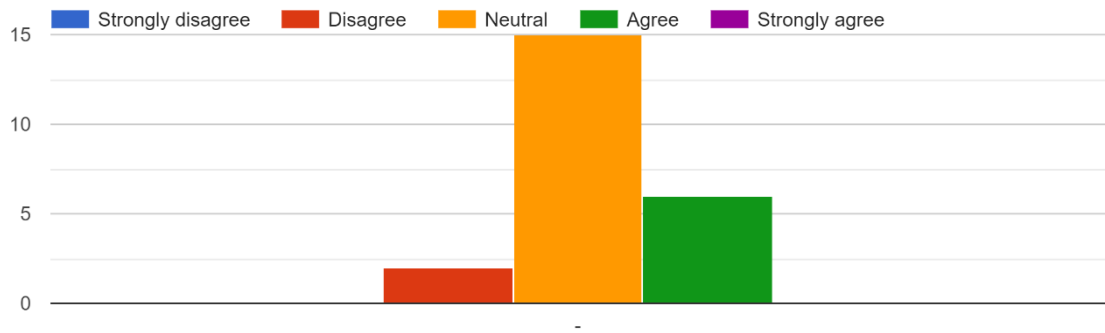


Figure 20. Manager and B2B buyer Q15.

This question did not get good answers since over half of the respondents did not have a strong enough opinion on the topic. 15 out of 23 respondents gave a neutral answer on a statement that top performer would be more productive in a group than alone. It can not be used as an example comparison for the literature.

5. I enjoy working alone more than in a group.

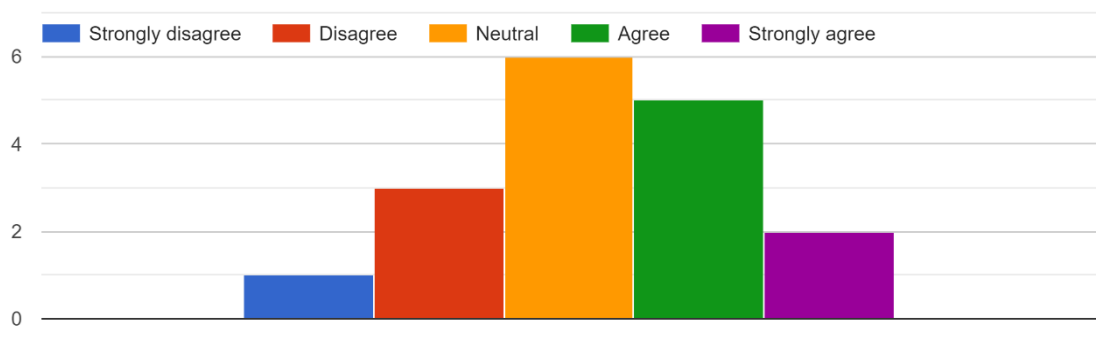


Figure 21. Salesperson Q5.

The results from salespersons is divided quite evenly on both sides and majority of the answers were neutral. There is a slight difference on the division still, there were 3 more respondents agreeing with enjoying working alone more. The division of the answers is still not big enough and tells that the result is unable to be compared to the literature once again.

15. I feel like I am more productive in a group than alone.

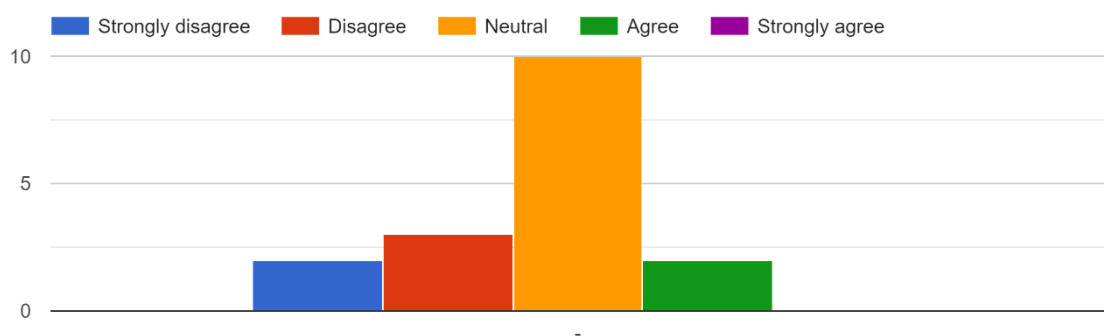


Figure 22. Salesperson Q15.

Feeling like being more productive in a group than alone gave out more neutral answers than the previous question (Q5.). The amount of neutral answers implicates that these answers can not be used in comparison for the literature either. This kind of data either gives out answer: the literature created is not trustworthy, or the questions created concerning this topic are not well enough crafted to bring out better answers.

The result of researching the lack of gregariousness in top performers did not show correlation with the literature. The respondents dominantly answered neutrally to three of the questions, indicating their lack of opinion on the topic. However, the first question (Figure X) did show conflicting result when comparing with the literature. The majority of managers and buyers think that top performer does not like to work alone more than in a group. It is on the contrary to the Martin's (2011) research that states that top performers show lack of gregariousness in their characteristics.

Lack of discouragement

6. Top performing salesperson does not lose motivation over failures.

23 vastausta

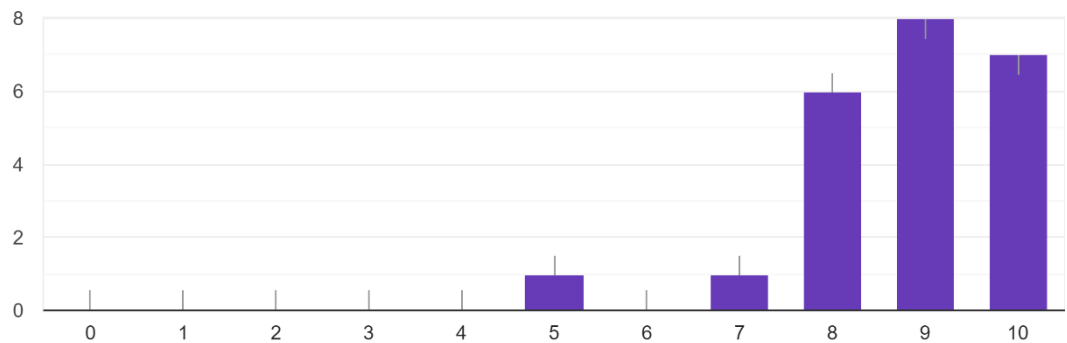


Figure 23. Manager and B2B buyer Q6.

Rating on this questionnaire was from 0 (relatively unimportant) to 10 (critical). As displayed in the statistic, nearly all of the respondents thought that not losing motivation over failures is critical or almost critical for a top performer. The literature agrees with this result since in the chapter 3.6 it is stated that only 10 percent of top performers are having high level of discouragement and feeling high levels of sadness frequently. The respondents are on the same line with the literature on this question. The question itself was successfully designed since it was able to get results in the very essence of lack of discouragement, losing motivation (3.6).

16. Top performing salesperson gets demotivated over hard criticism.

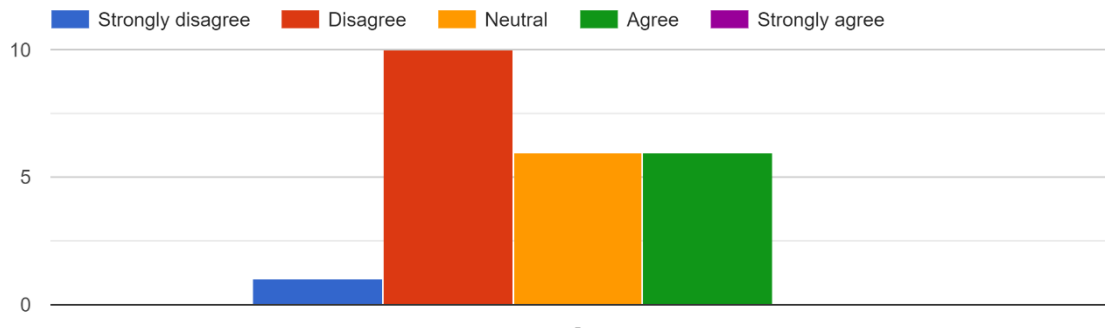


Figure 24. Manager and B2B buyer Q16.

This question was designed to measure whether the top performer not only have to endure criticism, but hard criticism. Majority of the respondents thought that top performers do not lose motivation over hard criticism, which reflects on the literature of lack of discouragement. In the chapter 3.6 it is stated that top performers can forget their failures so it doesn't affect their future performance, which is connected with being able to endure hard criticism.

6. I lose motivation over failures.

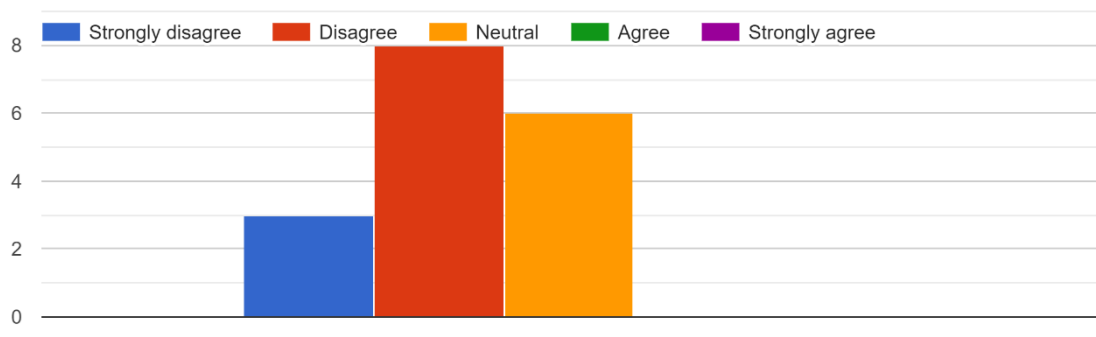


Figure 25. Salesperson Q6.

Not a single one of the top performers answered that they lose motivation over failures. Like the literature says, it is important to keep motivation and don't let failures affect your future performance. The result agrees with the literature.

16. I get demotivated over hard criticism.

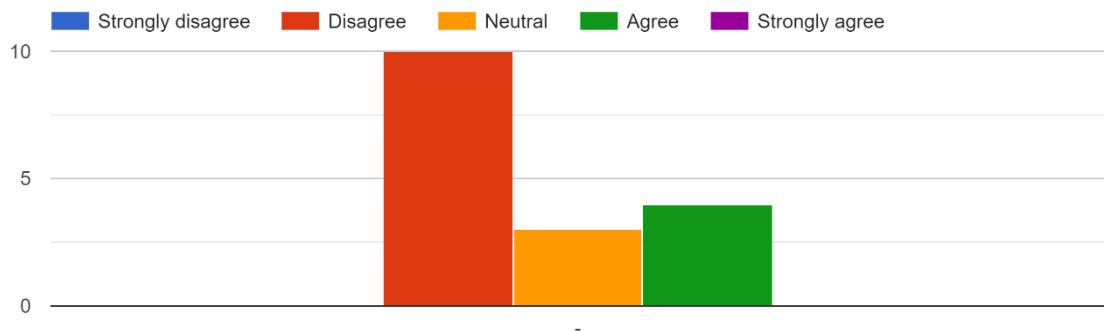


Figure 26. Salesperson Q16.

The hard criticism question was asked from the salespersons also, and majority of the top performers feel that they can endure it. Four out of seventeen respondents feel like they get demotivated over hard criticism, which is a bit higher percentage than literature says. Yet, the study shows that majority can keep their motivation, which is on the same line with the literature (3.6).

The results show that majority of the respondents think that top performers do lack self-consciousness. The data shows that top performers don't get demotivated from hard criticism or failures. This data reinforces the literature.

Lack of self-consciousness

7. Top performing salesperson does not get embarrassed easily.

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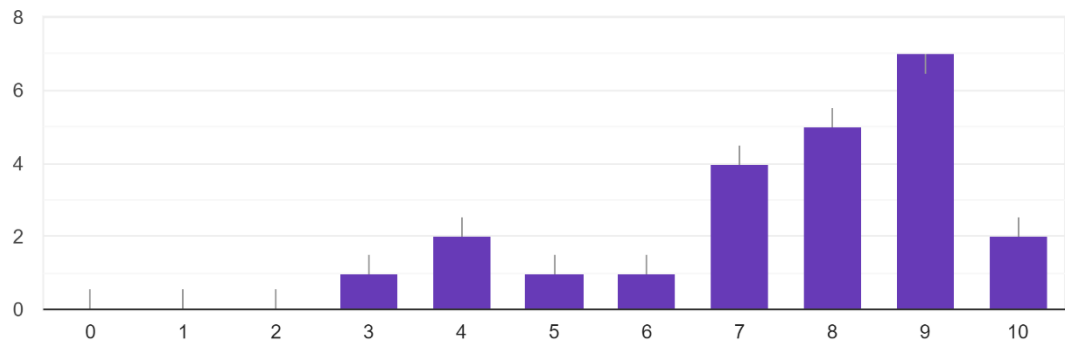


Figure 27. Manager and B2B buyer Q7.

This questionnaire is also rated from 0 (relatively unimportant) to 10 (critical). The respondents thought that top performers do not get embarrassed easily. The literature reinforces this result well, since in Martin's (2011) research he found out that less than five percent of top performers had high levels of self-consciousness. The study in the literature chapter states that top performers are not afraid of embarrassing themselves which makes making new deals easier. The same result is seen in the questionnaire results of this research.

17. Top performing salesperson gets remorse over embarrassing things they have done or said.

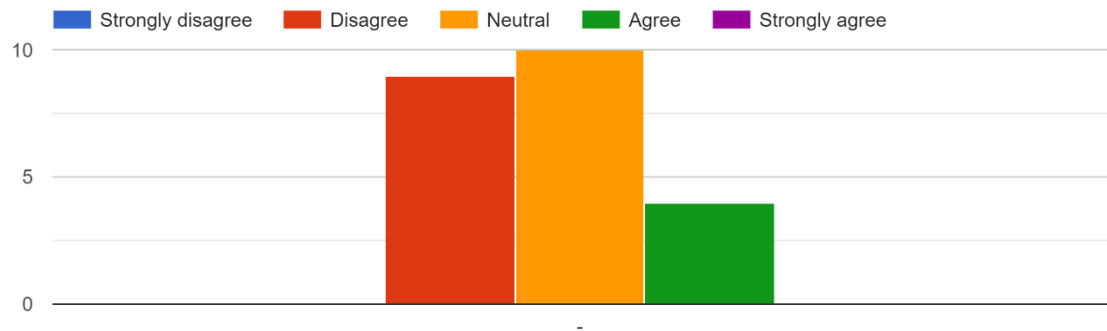


Figure 28. Manager and B2B buyer Q17.

The result of this question do not show that big of a division, still a clear weight on the side that a top performer does not get remorse over embarrassing things they have done or said. This connects to the first question which had a result stating that top performers should not get embarrassed. This result shows the same kind of theme. The literature (3.7) agrees with the result.

7. I get embarrassed easily.

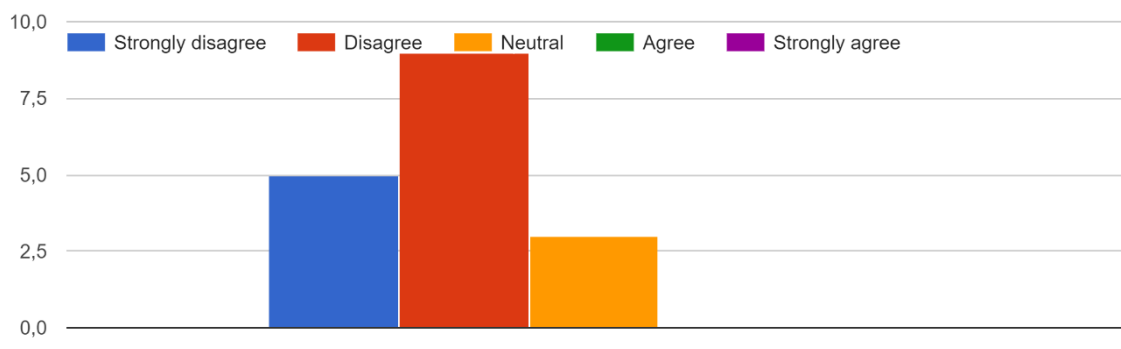


Figure 29. Salesperson Q7.

Nearly every answer on topic of getting embarrassed is negative. This implicates that not a single one of salespersons did feel like getting embarrassed easily. This reflects on the literature that tells how top performers lack self-consciousness or in different words, do not get embarrassed easily. Hence, the result agrees with the literature (3.7).

17. I get remorse over embarrassing things I have done or said.

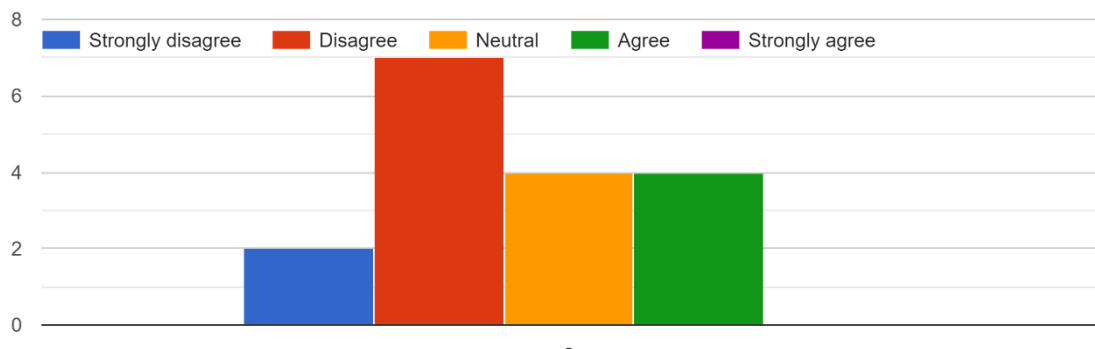


Figure 30. Salesperson Q17.

This question was designed to reinforce the question 7 concerning the topic of lack of self-consciousness. The result is not as radical as in the question 7, but yet it can be clearly seen that the respondents answers were on the side of not getting embarrassed. This reinforces the first finding of the research, and through that, the literature (3.7).

The majority of respondents think that top performers lack self-consciousness. The results show such data that can be used as a support to the literature created on the topic.

Empathy

8. Top performing salesperson has empathy.

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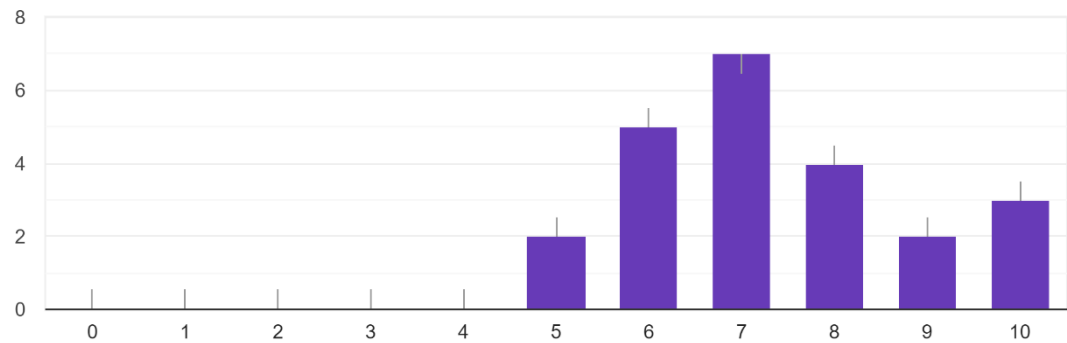


Figure 31. Manager and B2B buyer Q8.

This question result is also rated from 0 (relatively unimportant) to 10 (critical). The respondents thought that it is relatively important or even critical for a top performer to possess empathy. The result agrees with the literature (3.8) that thinks empathy is a critical characteristic for a top performer. The question is straight forward designed to find out the fact the importance of empathy, and the result was successful match with the literature.

18. Top performing salesperson reads other people's emotions well.

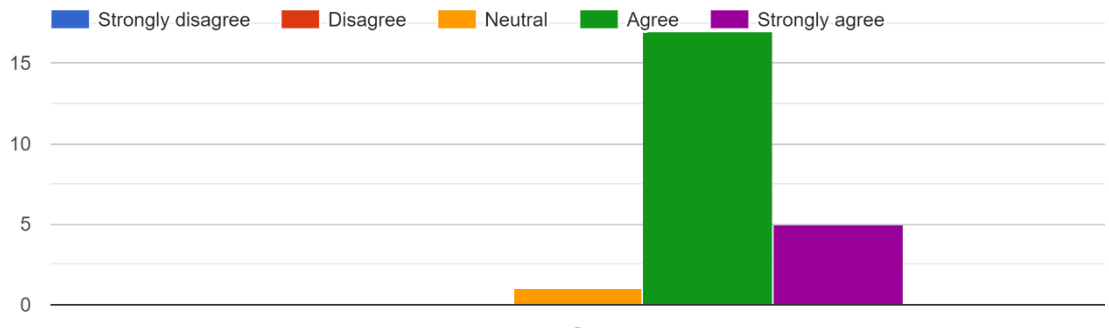


Figure 32. Manager and B2B buyer Q18.

The question was designed to reinforce the result of the previous question (Manager and B2B buyer Q8.) concerning the empathy characteristic. The result is similar to the previous one, agreeing with top performing salesperson being able to read other people's emotions, hence also agreeing with the literature (3.8).

8. I am an empathetic person.

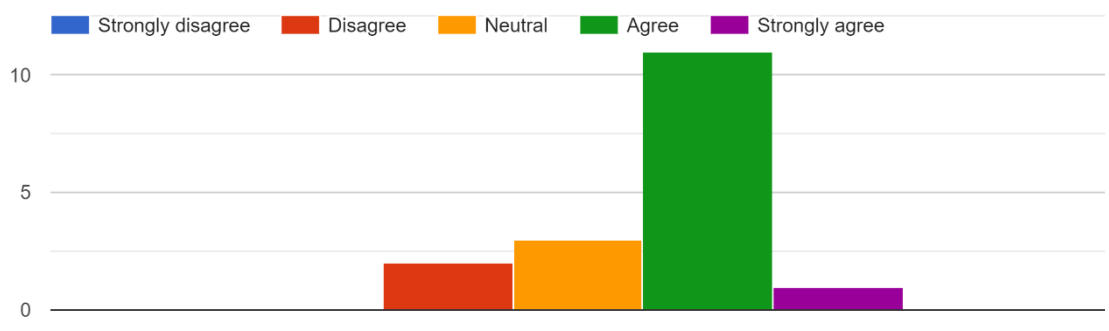


Figure 33. Salesperson Q8.

The question was designed to be straight forward inquiry of the empathy characteristic on top performers. The result was positive on possessing empathy. Almost every respondent seems to have empathy, which is a clear connection with the literature stating that a top performer possesses empathy in order to be flexible in sales process (3.8).

18. I can read other people's emotions well.

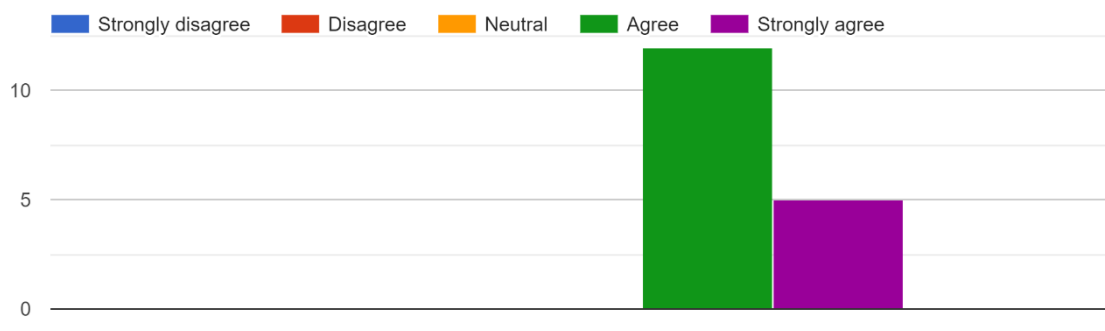


Figure 34. Salesperson Q18.

This question is a reinforce question for the previous one (salesperson Q8.) to find give validity to the result. The result is similar than the previous one thus, making the result more trustworthy. The result is in agreement with the literature (3.8).

The majority of the respondents gave out answers that a top performer is an empathetic person, thus being able to read other peoples emotions well. These findings can be compared with the literature and give support to it.

Ego drive

9. Top performing salesperson gains motivation more from money than the feeling of success.

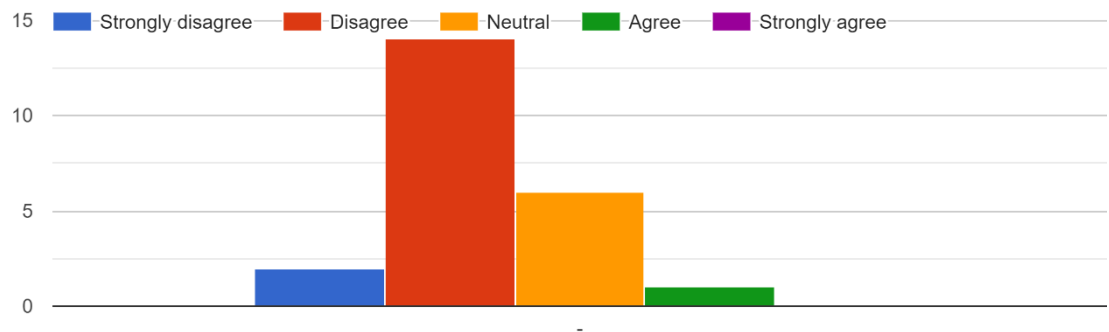


Figure 35. Manager and B2B buyer Q9.

The result of this question is very one sided. Only one respondent thought that the money is more important for top performing salesperson than the feeling of success motivation wise. This indicates that the top performer has some level of ego drive in his work. The literature agrees on that a top performer should have some level of ego drive going on in order to have an increasing slope in their future performance. Hence, the result agrees with the literature.

19. What do you think is more important for top performing salesperson: a successful sales process or a successful outcome for sales?

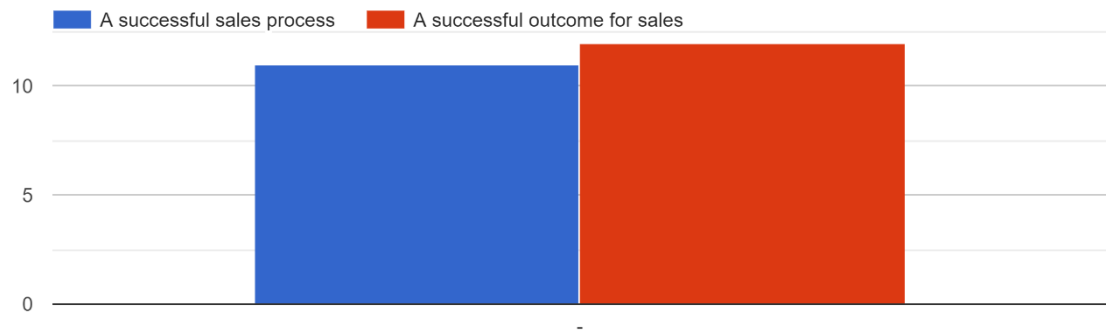


Figure 36. Manager and B2B buyer Q19.

The reason behind this question is to find out how managers and buyers perceive top performers' motivation on the whole sales process. Finding out whether the sales process itself or the outcome of the process is more important implicates the motivation behind the top performers' actions. The respondents' answers divided equally on both sides which indicates that a top performer is equally motivated from the successful sales process and the successful outcome.

However, it is important to find importance in the successful sales process as well, since the literature states that there's going to be more failed sales than successful ones, no matter what (3.9). If a top performer would find importance only in the outcome, they could lose motivation easier than the ones who find importance in the successful sales process as well. You can have a successful sales process with a negative outcome, That's why it is important to find motivation in the sales process as well.

9. My motivation originates more from money than the feeling of success.

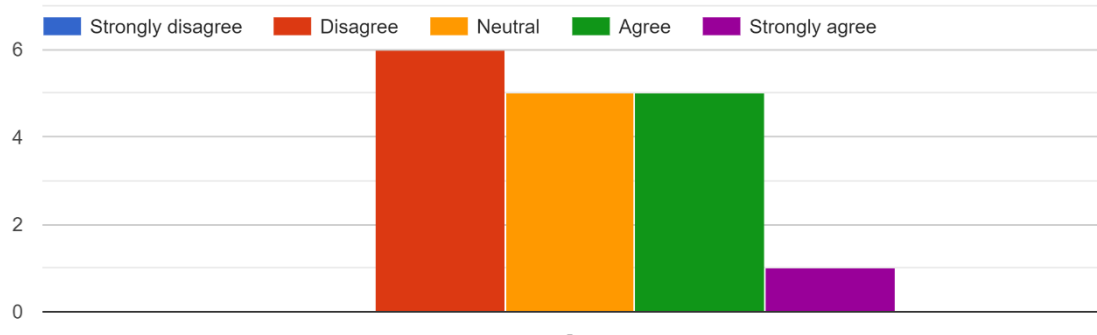


Figure 37. Salesperson Q9.

The result is divided in both parts, motivation from money and motivation from the feeling of success. This finding tells that half of the top performers find motivation through egoistic feeling of success more appealing than the monetary value of their work. It is important to find more motivation through the success, since it works as a great motivator that pushes one to perform even better in the future (3.9). The literature agrees that top performers find motivation through money also, but the feeling of success is in bigger part of play in here. It is the one that gives top performers their edge to keep going.

19. What's more important: a successful process or a successful outcome for sales?

17 vastausta

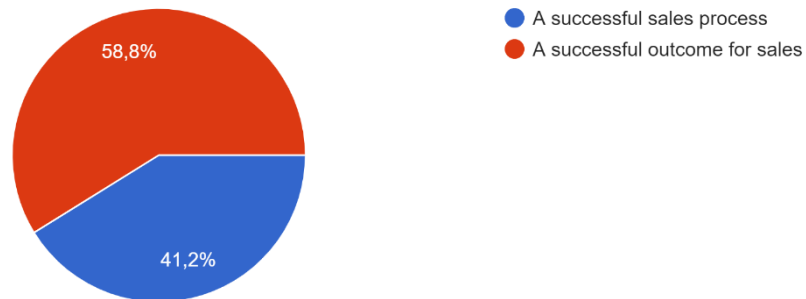


Figure 38. Salesperson Q19.

A slight majority of top performers thought that the outcome for sales is more important than the successful sales process. However, the division of responses is quite even. Like said before in Manager and B2B buyer Q19., it's important to find importance in both of these successes. More failures in outcomes are ahead of a top performer than successful deals, which is why the importance in successful sales process is important to find, to keep motivated for future performances (3.9).

Hard-working

10. Top performing salesman is a hard worker mindsetted person.

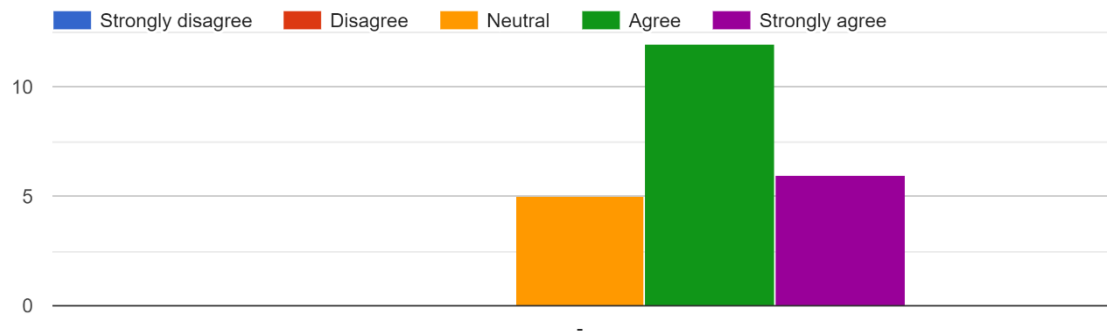


Figure 39. Manager and B2B buyer Q10.

Nearly all of the respondents think that a top performing salesperson should be a hard worker mindsetted person. Only a few of respondents had a neutral stance, but not a single one on the disagreeing side. Being a hard worker is essential in top performers daily work. Top performers need to be looking for new contacts and sustaining current clients connections, and this requires activity and hard work (3.10). The literature agrees that a top performer does not get by with a little. They need to be on their toes at all times and on top of everything.

20. A top performing salesman gets negative stress out of a work overload.

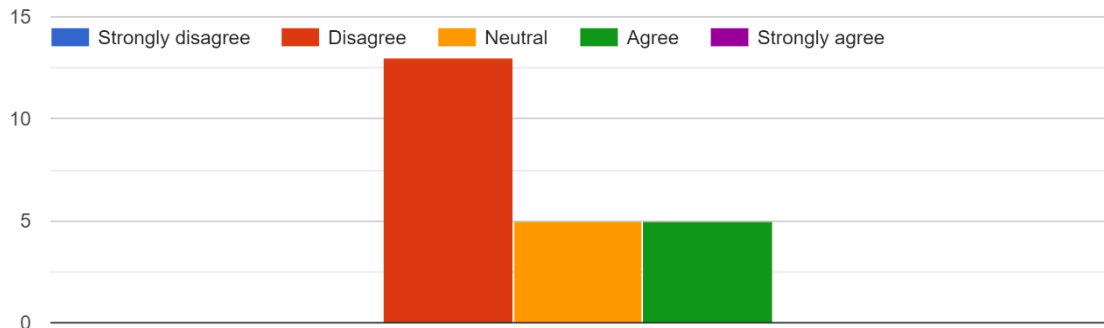


Figure 40. Manager and B2B Buyer Q20.

The question concerns the hard-working characteristic of a top performing sales person. If a top performer is a hard worker, he might get a work overload from time to time, which could lead in to stressful seasons. This is why it is important to find out how does a top performer deal with this kind of stress.

The respondents think that a top performer does not get negative stress from work overload. It is important to be on your best at all times, and not getting stressed from a lot of work is a great performance enhancer. This reinforces the literature in a way that a top performer indeed should be a hard-worker, because they will not likely to get stressed from it (3.10).

10. I am more a laid-back person than a hard-working person.

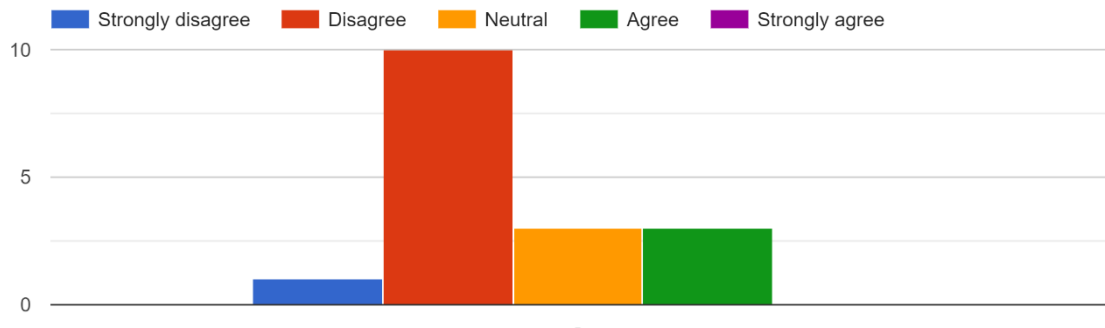


Figure 41. Salesperson Q10.

Nearly all of the top performer respondents feel like they are more a hard-working persons. Like stated in the literature (3.10), it is essential for a top performer to be a hard-worker in order to keep performing on the top tier. The literature definitely agrees with this result.

20. How stressed does a work overload get you?



Figure 42. Salesperson Q20.

Managers and buyers were asked whether a top performer get negative stress from work overload, and the answer was that they do not get negative stress from it. However, top performers were asked how stressed a work overload gets them. The result shows that majority feel a little stress from a work overload, and minority get stressed or stressed a lot. This result reinforces the literature that a top performer can keep working with high intensity to keep their contacts well managed, trying to exceed the customers expectations constantly and digging through possible new customers (3.10).

The majority of respondents think that top performer does not get a lot of negative stress from work overload. This implicates that top performers endure a lot of work stress. The majority of respondents also think that top performer is hard working mindsetted person, hence the results supports the literature statements.

The lack of gregariousness was only confirmed by one author in the literature review and there were not any other literature found concerning this topic. It gave a good chance for this research to find out whether it can be reinforced with the findings or will there be conflicts with the result. Turned out, that the results were conflicting with the literature when asked from managers and B2B buyers point of view. In short, the respondents thought that a top performer does not enjoy working alone. When asked from the top performers, the minority of answers were divided on both agreeing and disagreeing sides, and majority of the answers were neutral. This does not give any kind of trustworthy data that could be used. Hence, the literature claim that a top performer has lower level of gregariousness could not be proven through this research.

Literature's other nine characteristics could be justified and reinforced with the research conducted. Hence, modesty, conscientiousness, achievement orientation, curiosity, lack of discouragement, lack of self-consciousness, empathy, ego drive and hard-working can be found in the top performers' characteristic traits in an important role. The questionnaire didn't handle the topic of synergistic effect of characteristics well enough that are discussed in the literature chapter (4). But it can be concluded, that these traits that have a synergy between each other are found in a top performer. The research however couldn't make the connections between these characteristics and measure whether it further improves the performance of a top performer.

However, the research itself has a factor that can affect the reliability of the result: cultural aspects of said characteristics. Some could comprehend modesty or humility for example, in one way in one culture, and different in another. This research could have different kind of outcome if conducted in South Africa for example. These cultural aspects bring limitations to the research.

6 CONCLUSION

The study concerns the characteristics of a top performing salesperson, defining the top traits that they possess and how these characteristics help a top performer to be the elite among other salespersons. Martin (2011) states, there are 10 different characteristics that are shown to be among the top traits that a top performers possess. From these characteristics a questionnaire was designed and conducted to find out does this study reinforce these claims.

The study in overall reinforces the literature review findings. A questionnaire was designed mainly using Likert scale questions. The questionnaire was conducted in a tight timespan, but the results for data were able to be gathered in the designed timetable. Amount of respondents were also satisfying since 77% of respondents gave out answers for the study, or more in detail, 40 responses out of the total 52.

The questionnaire gave out clear results that could be compared well to the findings of Martin. Nearly all results agreed with the written literature, but there were couple of question that were not designed well enough or they did not match with the literature statements. The discrepancies were with lack of gregariousness and one question designed for measuring humility in top performers.

Concluding the research results, 9 out of 10 characteristics studied in this research showed up in top performing salesperson's personality trait palet. Lack of gregariousness was the only characteristic standing out of the line. This research could not reinforce Martin's (2011) findings that a top performing salesperson does not feel the need of group and manages well while being alone. Further research could try to tackle the lack of gregariousness as a characteristic in top performing salesperson, finding out whether it plays an important role in the characteristics. Other suggestion for further research is to find out whether the cultural aspect of said characteristics have an effect on the outcome of the result.

In conclusion, when one might be dealing with a top performing B2B salesperson, it is for sure that modesty, conscientiousness, achievement orientation, curiosity, lack of

discouragement, lack of self-consciousness, empathy, ego drive and hard-working will be most likely personality traits of that person.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

12.6.2019

Characteristics of a salesperson

Characteristics of a salesperson

This questionnaire is designed for a study that concerns characteristics of a salesperson. The main purpose why this questionnaire is being conducted is to find out different personality traits that a salesperson might possess.

Please answer as truthfully as possible!

1. 1. I am a humble person.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. 2. When I start something, I feel the need to finish the job well and thoroughly.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. 3. I set goals for myself often.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. 4. I want to gain more knowledge on my field of work.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. 5. I enjoy working alone more than in a group.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. 6. I lose motivation over failures.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. 7. I get embarrassed easily.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12.6.2019

Characteristics of a salesperson

8. I am an empathetic person.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. My motivation originates more from money than the feeling of success.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. I am more a laid-back person than a hard-working person.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. I like to brag with my big achievements.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. I like to organize my personal activities properly.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Achieving my goals is important.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. I ask a lot of questions.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I feel like I am more productive in a group than alone.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I get demotivated over hard criticism.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12.6.2019

Characteristics of a salesperson

17. 17. I get remorse over embarrassing things I have done or said.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. 18. I can read other people's emotions well.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. 19. What's more important: a successful process or a successful outcome for sales?*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

- A successful sales process
- A successful outcome for sales

20. 20. How stressed does a work overload get you?*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Not at all	A little stressed	Stressed	Stressed a lot	Overwhelmingly stressed
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12.6.2019

Characteristics of a top performing salesperson

Characteristics of a top performing salesperson

This questionnaire is designed for a study that concerns characteristics of a top performing salesperson. The main purpose why this questionnaire is being conducted is to find out different personality traits that a top performing salesperson might possess.

Definition of a top performing salesperson:

- Meets annual goals set
- High win rates in deals (40% or greater)
- Being able to get maximum prices from deals

Please answer as truthfully as possible!

1. Top performing salesperson is a humble person.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Top performing salesperson always finishes their given tasks with precision from beginning to the end.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Top performing salesperson sets themselves goals weekly.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Top performing salesperson tries to gain more knowledge on their field of work constantly.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Top performing salesperson enjoys working alone more than in a group.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Top performing salesperson does not lose motivation over failures.

Merkitse vain yksi soikio.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Relatively unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Critical

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rfr89ei0nkOTY3NB5m9FTW2P2xHcQIIIMu-paXjqsVtk/edit>

1/3

12.6.2019

Characteristics of a top performing salesperson

7. 7. Top performing salesperson does not get embarrassed easily.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Relatively unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Critical

8. 8. Top performing salesperson has empathy.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio.*

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Relatively unimportant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Critical

9. 9. Top performing salesperson gains motivation more from money than the feeling of success.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. 10. Top performing salesman is a hard worker mindsetted person.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. 11. Top performing salesperson brags with his big achievements.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. 12. Top performing salesperson tends to be well self-organized person.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. 13. Achieving personal goals is important for a top performing salesperson.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. 14. Top performing salesperson asks a lot of questions.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12.6.2019

Characteristics of a top performing salesperson

15. 15. Top performing salesperson would be more productive in a group than alone.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

-

16. 16. Top performing salesperson gets demotivated over hard criticism.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

-

17. 17. Top performing salesperson gets remorse over embarrassing things they have done or said.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

-

18. 18. Top performing salesperson reads other people's emotions well.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

-

19. 19. What do you think is more important for top performing salesperson: a successful sales process or a successful outcome for sales?*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

A successful sales process A successful outcome for sales

-

20. 20. A top performing salesman gets negative stress out of a work overload.*Merkitse vain yksi soikio riviä kohden.*

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

-