



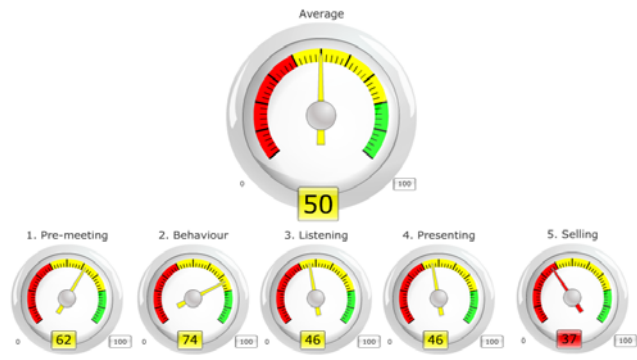
UK salespeople: excellent soft skills, superb presentation – but what about the *selling* ?

Having benchmarked 1000 UK salespeople over a two-year period, Silent Edge, the UK sales performance authority, has new research which demonstrates that – for all their admirable skills and qualities – UK salespeople underperform when it comes to actually selling.

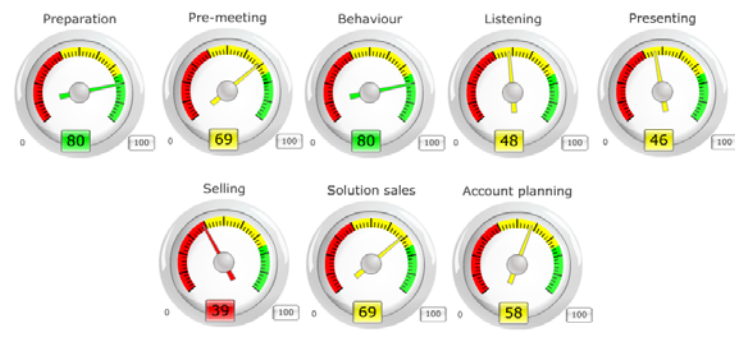
Over the past four years Silent Edge has pioneered live, objective, statistical evaluation of salespeople's capabilities, using this analysis to motivate salesforces across the UK to change their behaviour and to take learning on board. Silent Edge's most recent set of data, produced between Spring 2004 and Spring 2006, provides clear evidence that selling is the area in which most UK salespeople are weakest.

The chart below shows that when it comes to creating an initial impression with the kind of behaviour you'll see in a recruitment interview, salespeople are strong; but their skills in front of a prospect or client (listening, presenting and selling) are weak.

New Business Competency Summary UK Sales Force Averages



Account Manager Competency Score™ UK Sales Force Averages



UK salespeople look good, have great personalities, establish a strong rapport with prospects and have a sound knowledge of the products and services they are offering. In the Silent Edge study they scored above 80% for each of the following metrics:-

- Personal presentation 96%
- Rapport with prospect 94%
- Company offerings 83%
- Product/Service knowledge 86%

However, salespeople are far weaker when it comes to the skills which actually constitute 'making the sale', scoring less than 40%:

- Closing skills 46%

- Differentiation from the competition 31%
- Objection-handling capability 30%
- Negotiation skills 16%
- Articulating the Value Proposition 15%

Russell Ward, a Director at Silent Edge, said: *“These results should stagger anyone who is not used to working with salesteams across the UK. Yes, most salespeople scrub up well, are personable and can establish a rapport with the prospect. And they know their onions – everyone we benchmarked was credible when it came to company background, understanding their products and the market in general. BUT – and it’s a pretty big BUT – when it comes to selling, they’re not as good as they should be! Only one in five deals ever gets closed in the UK today, so vast swathes of the average blue-chip firm’s sales and marketing resource is being wasted. In most of the cases we’ve seen, it’s more a matter of faults in the training process than incompetence. We seem to labour under the delusion that great salespeople are born, not made. As a result, most sales training adopts the ‘throw lots of mud against the wall and hope some of it sticks’ format. The so-called training is often not relevant to the individual salesperson and does not take into account his or her specific level of competency. Nor does it motivate salespeople to want to change their behaviour.*

“UK salespeople also struggle when it comes to resolving problems and negotiating. They tend to be strong when singing off their own hymn sheet or creating solutions off the cuff. In other words, as long as they’re making the running, they’re fine. But once the client puts the salesperson on the back foot, performance – and results – inevitably suffer.”

“Finally, the other key factor in sales performance is the management of the salesforce. Most sales managers are ‘best salesperson turned manager’. However, the qualities needed for a successful sales manager are often the antithesis of the qualities that make a successful salesperson. Evaluating a team’s sales management capability is vital to long-term success.”

About Silent Edge

Silent Edge, an authority on improving sales performance and driving revenue, is run by sales professionals for sales professionals.

Silent Edge use its objective, competency-based evaluation process and bespoke development programmes (generated by the results of salesforce evaluation) to work rapidly and rigorously to improve the performance of salesteams across the UK.

FREE EVALUATION FOR A MEMBER OF YOUR SALESTEAM

The first ten recipients of this report to respond to this offer will be eligible for a FREE evaluation of one of their sales people ** - call 01892 890111 or email sales@silentedge.co.uk, stating that you are responding to the eMedia mailing.

Client Testimonials

"I have used every training course and well-known brand in my career, but I have never seen anything like Silent Edge. They transformed my salesforce, taking their revenues from £750k a month to £4m a month in 6 months. More remarkably, the other 6 regions in CW did not increase their revenues during this time"

Mike Siddon – Regional MD - C&W

"We were introduced to Silent Edge through the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management, as they were judging some of the categories at the British Excellence in Sales and Marketing Awards. We were so impressed with their detailed ability to objectively identify the sales skills and ability of salespeople and sales managers that we have now invited them to deliver a module encompassing their work on our Sales Management residential course. I would recommend that any sales manager or director look at Silent Edge if they are considering improving the performance of their salesteams."

Laurence Williams - Director - Sales Director's Programme - Ashridge Management College

"The team at Silent Edge knows what face-to-face sales is all about. They know what makes sales work; they know all the things that must happen in a sales meeting to get results. They improve performance to deliver better revenues. It's as simple as that!"

Liam Donnelly - Sales Director - Arval

"I thought the whole experience has been very helpful in as much as I can genuinely say I have taken more away from this course than from any other in which I have participated"

Edward Van Cutsem – Salesperson - Merrill Lynch Dec 05

"The evaluation day was brilliant. It is so refreshing to be with a company that really understands sales"

Close Brothers Premium Finance

"We have received an enormous amount of really positive feedback from our sales team following the individual Silent Edge Critical Hour audit days. The overwhelming message was that this was the most interesting and informative day which they had experienced in a sales environment. One salesman said that he had learned more in this one day than on the whole variety of week-long courses which he had previously attended. And this was only the audit day – I'm really looking forward to the feedback from the scheduled training"

John O'Brien – CEO - Sematron

Silent Edge works with blue-chip clients and SME's across a broad range of industries.

For more information see www.silentedge.co.uk

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** A free evaluation will be granted if the prospect has engaged in a project with Silent Edge