

BENCHMARK STUDY
SUMMARY REPORT
FOR INDEPENDENT
INSURANCE AGENTS OF
TEXAS (IIAT)- SALES
PRODUCERS



PREPARED JANUARY 2009
CONDUCTED BY

ZERORISK HR,™ Inc.

STUDY SUMMARY

This report will summarize the findings of the Sales Producer Benchmark Study conducted within for IIAT. The study was designed to identify, through objective means, the core traits and emotional intelligence competencies that correlate to success in the Sales Producer position within the state of Texas. By identifying and defining these core success competencies, Agents & Brokers will be better equipped to recognize these competencies for two key purposes: in future candidates to assist in making better hiring decisions; in current employees to determine training and development needs, as well as promotion decisions.

ABOUT THE STUDY GROUP

The study consisted of 37 current Insurance Sales Producers in Texas.

The employees included in the study were classified by their overall performance ranking, and all were considered to be successful producers. The performance criteria used for the performance rankings was identified by each individual participating agency to include proven sales success of at least one year.

UNDERSTANDING CORE COMPETENCIES

The ZERORISK Hiring System (ZRHS) based on the Hartman-Kinsel Value Profile (HKVP) was used as the method of assessment for the participants of this study. It is a value-based assessment that identifies a person's core emotional intelligence competencies and behaviors.

ZRHS measures six facets of thinking that contribute to these competencies. Three of these facets focus on how the person thinks about the world, things, and other people; these are labeled "Intuition and Empathy," "Results Orientation and Decisiveness," and "Adherence and Organization." The other three facets reveal how the person thinks about the uniqueness of his/her self; these are labeled "Self View," "Self Awareness," and "Self Expectations." As with the multiple ways a person views the world and themselves, the actual measurements of these thinking facets reflect much more about the person than the labels imply. It is important to understand that these labels are assigned to the measurements as a matter of convenience. The scoring scale for each facet is based upon a scale of 0 to 10, with 6 being the point of balanced thinking. Therefore, a higher score is not

necessarily a better score. The closer the person scores to 0, the less the person pays attention to the issues falling within the particular facet. The closer the person's score is to 10, the more fixated the person is on the issues involving that facet.

In the findings below, all six competencies are important. However, the critical competencies highlighted for each specific role reflect a greater key variance exhibited between top performers and weak performers. There are certain correlations between the six competencies that can be explained by ZERORISK HR's staff during the debriefing meeting to present the results of the study.

STUDY FINDINGS – INSURANCE SALES PRODUCERS

This group consisted of 37 individuals. The following highlights the critical competencies identified for this role that are the key differentiators between the top performers and weak performers.

- **Intuition & Empathy** – This competency measures an individual's ability to see the uniqueness in other people. This allows them to connect emotionally with others and build strong client relationships. 72% of the top producers scored to be attentive, to and have clear thinking, in this competency (scores 6, 7 and 8). This data is in-line with previous benchmark studies conducted on this role in this industry.

- **Results Orientation & Decisiveness** – This competency measures how an individual thinks in relative or comparative ways, and provides insight into the level of patience, as well as the decision making style of the individual. 81% of the top producers scored to be inattentive (scores below a 6) to this particular competency, which doesn't mean they aren't "results oriented". It does tell us, however, that the top producers have a level of patience to deal with selling in an environment that may require a longer sales cycle. They also have the attention to detail to work with complex and technical information. This data is in-line with previous benchmark studies conducted on this role in this industry. For example, our studies in the auto dealer industry tell us that top salespeople in that industry score much higher in this competency, which causes them to be highly impatient, which may result in not being able to work a long sales cycle without becoming frustrated.

- Adherence & Organization – This competency measures how attentive to black & white or right & wrong concepts the person is. This allows them to be more conceptual and consultative in their selling approach and focused on logical solutions and ideal concepts. 81% of the top producers scored to be very attentive to this competency (scores 6, 7, 8 and 9). This data is in-line with previous benchmark studies conducted on this role in this industry.

- Self View – This competency measures how an individual handles rejection and criticism, and is a critical competency in any sales position. 95% of the top producers scored 3, 4, or 5 in this competency. This means that this top performing group feels the “pain” of sales rejection, but most likely has thick enough skin to not take the rejection personally, learn from the rejection, and be able to go after the next deal. This data is in-line with previous benchmark studies conducted on this role in this industry.

- Self Awareness – This competency measures an individual’s ability to think positively about their own personal competence in comparison to other people. This competency is one of the main sources of personal confidence, competitiveness, and a need for personal recognition such as commissions, bonuses etc. 72% of the top producers scored to be attentive to this competency (scores 6, 7, 8 and 9). This provides the producer with enough personal confidence to be persuasive and be motivated by the individual rewards and recognition for their accomplishments. This data is in-line with previous benchmark studies conducted on this role in this industry.

- Self Expectations – This competency measures an individual’s ability to focus on their ideal self, personal commitments and goals. It also can measure a level of personal stress the individual may be under at a given time. 72% of the top producers scored to be attentive to this competency (scores 6, 7, 8 and 9). This provides the producer with the internal direction to stay focused on their personal sales goals and the ability to work through difficult times. This data is in-line with previous benchmark studies conducted on this role in this industry.

Key Study Correlation

- 70% of the top producers scored to be attentive (6 +) in either the Results Orientation & Decisiveness Competency or the Self Awareness Competency. These two competencies measure what is called Extrinsic Thinking (thinking in relative or comparative ways). Selling is an Extrinsic function. It's getting the prospect or customer to see that your product or service is BETTER than the competition, and that doing business with your agency is their BEST choice. Producers that are attentive (6+) to one, or both, of these competencies are naturally able to see how they can influence a buying decision. For sales candidates that have scores of 5 or below in BOTH Results Orientation & Decisiveness and Self Awareness, in the interview please determine how many contacts/relationships that they might be able to bring with them to your agency, and also determine their level of experience as a producer in this industry. Those that have a high amount of experience and contacts will be less risky vs. someone that is new to selling in the industry.

Resulting Success Hiring Benchmark for a Producer

Measured Competency	Success Score Range
Intuition & Empathy (Service Orientation & Client Relationship Building Skills)	6 - 8
Results Orientation & Decisiveness (Attention to Detail & Degree of Patience for Long Sales Cycle)	4 - 8
Adherence & Organization (Attention to Rules & Ideal Concepts)	6 - 9
Self View (Resiliency and ability to handle sales rejection)	3 - 5
Self Awareness (Confidence, Competitiveness, and Persuasion Skills)	6 - 9
Self Expectations (Personal Accountability & Goal Orientation)	6 - 9

