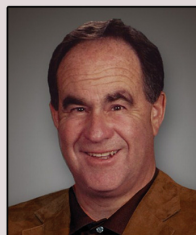


2010

# The Sales Intelligence System

*Drives Superior Sales Results*

Stu Schlackman



**Stu Schlackman**  
*defines* **C**ompetitive  
**E**xcellence



The "Sales Intelligence System" *Drives Superior Sales Results*

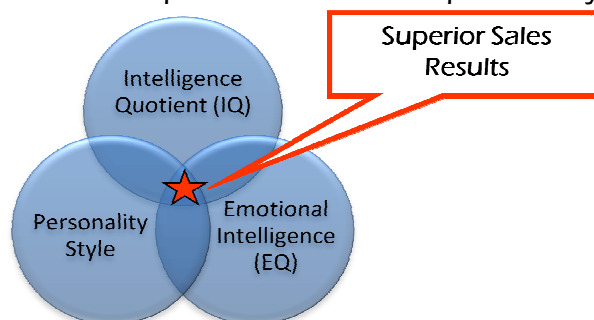
# The Sales Intelligence System

By Stu Schlackman

The Sales Intelligence System is based on the principle that when you consider Intelligence (IQ), Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Personality Styles, you will achieve *Superior Sales Results*. While there are many excellent training approaches in the world of selling, most focus on skill and technique. To better understand the needs of the customer and develop the right strategy and approach you must convey your value in order to win the sale and build a long term partnership for repeat business. We have found that customers make decisions with two reasons in mind. What will it do for my business and what will it do for me personally? The question becomes which one is most important and will they share this with the sales professional?

Most sales training approaches focus on a process entirely from the business perspective. Whether it's training in asking questions, prospecting skills, presentation skills or strategic planning, the approach is from an educational perspective where technique and process is the main emphasis. This is what we call intelligence or in academic terms IQ the Intelligence Quotient. It's the ability to learn and apply. But, sales is a game of momentum where other factors must be considered. "The Sales Intelligence System" takes into account three perspectives when it comes to approaching potential customers. They are:

- **IQ**- the Intelligence Quotient for the skills, techniques and process to approach customers who have a need for a solution. The emphasis here is aptitude.
- **EQ**- the Emotional Quotient is being aware of what is going on emotionally in the meeting between all parties involved. What are the feelings with the individuals interacting? Are they positive, negative or indifferent and how can this be influenced? You can call this intuition or people skills.
- **Personality Style**- being able to understand the personality type of the customer to leverage and anticipate what is important to their temperament. We can gain insight into the person's behavior based on the preferences of their personality style.



Generally when we interact with each other we size up what's happening in a conversation from **our** perspective. We make judgments and evaluations of the other person based on what we are like and what we prefer. Therefore if the other person is not

like us we formulate an opinion that is either positive or negative and sometimes indifferent. We consider them to be warm and friendly or possibly cold and unsociable. Our perceptions of others are not always accurate since we do not consider their preferences based on their personality style, but on our own preferences which quite often can be different. Our perception will impact our emotions which is how we feel about the other person. Our emotions will impact our behavior which will either be negative or positive, defensive or aggressive, proactive or reactive. Finally the way we behave will be directly proportional to how the other person will behave towards us. So if we seem disinterested in the other person, they most likely will behave the same way. This can all be avoided if we take into consideration that everyone is not always of the same personality style.

Research shows that a person's IQ is pretty much set for life between the ages of five and fifteen. Also a person's personality style is set from the time they are born till the day they leave this earth. Personality does get tempered based on maturity and the circumstances we face in life such as how our parents raised us, schooling, marriage, kids and changing careers. But your primary personality style does not change. The only factor that can be improved is your emotional quotient or as Daniel Goldman calls it, "Emotional Intelligence."

Even though emotional intelligence is the only part of our makeup that we can significantly improve on, we feel it is extremely important to understand the characteristics of the four primary personality styles in order to make the necessary adjustments. Being aware of someone's personality style will give us insight as to how they prefer to interact and communicate which will help us in understanding their views and how they prefer to be approached. The result will be an improvement in our awareness and the management of our own emotional intelligence.

There is a big emphasis on emotional intelligence today. Dr. Michael Cox formerly with the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank released a study in 2006 that listed the top 6 most needed business skills in the US today. According to Dr. Cox, the number one skill needed "people skills and emotional intelligence." This is something that we don't learn in school, but in life. The definition of emotional intelligence is the managing, assessing and expressing of feelings. It's how we interact with others in regards to communication, the give and take in a conversation, how we control anger, patience, sadness, energy levels and the overall ability to build relationships with others whether people agree or disagree.

In the book *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, Travis Bradberry explains the four parts of emotional intelligence. The first is self awareness which helps us understand who we are and what our strengths and shortcomings are when working with other people. We need to have a keen understanding of what we like and dislike when we interact. The second is social awareness which helps us understand the setting we are in with others. Who is getting along and agreeing and who is not? Why one person likes to dominate a meeting and others sit back and observe. This can give us great insight when we focus on what's

happening with others around us. The third point is self management which is the ability to manage our emotions around others. The fourth point is social management which takes the observation to the next step in being able to manage and be proactive in the social setting we are in. This is so important when it comes to building a high performance team whether it's in a service or sales team or an information technology team. The fact of the matter is that teams that get along and understand each other have greater performance. When people tension goes down, productivity goes up.

In my opinion emotional intelligence accounts for well over 50% of the reason sales professionals are successful. It's their ability to read into the sales situation and truly assess where they are in the sales cycle and where they stand with the customer. But for many of us in sales we sometimes don't understand why in one sales situation where everything clicks we get the sale and sometimes in a very similar situation where the customer has the same requirements, the sale is lost to the competition or it just goes away and no decision is made. We ask ourselves why this happened when the outcome just didn't make sense. We believe this is where we need to better understand personality styles which will improve our emotional intelligence to better understand the person we were dealing with in the sale.

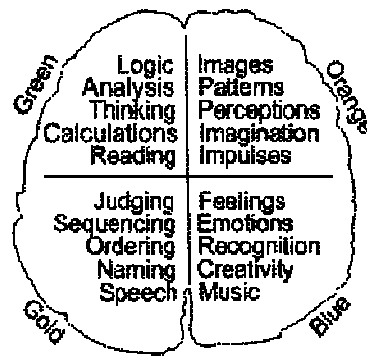
In exploring personality styles we know that there are many excellent models today that are very accurate in depicting the characteristics of the different temperaments. There's Myers-Briggs, DISC, the Four Social Styles and others. Myers-Briggs has 16 possible different personality styles since they take into account extroversion and introversion. Most of the other models have four primary personality styles. The *Personality Perspective Process* that we support was originally designed by Insight Learning which categorizes the four primary personality styles by color. We use Insight Learning's model because it is so easy to apply to others due to its simplicity. It's easy to remember the characteristics of a color; therefore it's the best model for being accurate in identifying the color of the other person. Most models focus on you, but with Insight's model we can be successful in understanding the other person's personality style. It's also easy to remember a face with a name and with a color. Four years after our workshops, sales professionals are still using the model in their sales environment and reporting success.

To achieve *Superior Sales Results* and improve our emotional intelligence we need to better understand how people make decisions, prefer to communicate, understand what they value, their view of risk and conflict and what motivates them to action. Each person has their strengths and weaknesses which has much to do with the makeup of what we call their personality spectrum. This is comprised of their four colors where the primary is the first color, then the secondary, tertiary and finally quaternary. In the spectrum the primary color tells us the strengths of the individual's personality style and the most about their preferences. The secondary has some influence and the lowest color (quaternary) is typically what the person will avoid the most and might consider a weakness.

The colors in the *Personality Perspective Process* are Blue, Gold, Green and Orange. We can learn to recognize a person's primary color through conversations with them that will give us hints about what interests they have and what they do for a living. Here are some examples of each color's job preferences:

- Blues enjoy careers that focus on relationships such as teaching, human resources, counseling, nursing and music. Blues are creative and enjoy expressing themselves.
- Golds enjoy positions of authority. It is very common to find chief executive, financial and operations officers in this position. Lawyers, accountants and CPA's are very common for this personality. Gold's focus on tasks, are agenda driven and measure worth by completion. Financial return is very important in their decision making.
- Greens enjoy careers that are technical in nature. Scientists, engineers and information technology consultants are most common. They thrive on information and detail and are very inquisitive since learning is a priority.
- Oranges enjoy careers that are fast moving and competitive in nature. Sales, marketing, firemen, policemen, carpenters and coaches are common to the Orange personality. They enjoy fixing chaos, enjoy challenges and the freedom to get up and go. They are impulsive in nature and like to make decisions quickly.

In breaking down the quadrants of the brain we can better understand the four colors and their characteristics. The following picture is from the Insight Learning Foundation whose founder is Nathan Bryce.



From the graphic you can see that the brain is divided into four quadrants with two left brain quadrants (Green and Gold) and two right brain quadrants (Orange and Blue). Dr. Roger Sperry won the Nobel Prize in 1981 for his experimentation on the functions of the left and right brain hemispheres. He concluded that the left brain is about thinking and the right brain is the free flow of creative ideas. To put this in another perspective, the left brain is about task and the right brain is about relationship. Left brain people will lean more towards making decisions for the business reasons and the right brain people lean more towards personal reasons. Left brain dominance will look at issues with an objective view focusing on the tangibles. Right brain dominance will lean towards being subjective and consider the intangibles. This is very important when we try to emphasize the benefits of

our solutions to a customer. Understanding their temperament will help us to understand what their preferences are in a solution and what they consider value.

From Daniel Pink's book *A Whole New Mind* he shows how each side of the brain functions. For example the left side focuses on the verbal which is "what" is said in a conversation. The right side focuses on the non verbal which is "how" something is said taking into account gestures and inflection and tone in the person's voice. The left side of the brain likes to start with details and builds the big picture. The right side prefers to start with the big picture and look at the details if it's necessary. The left side of the brain focuses on the text while the right side focuses on the context. The left prefers analysis and the right prefers synthesis. The left is logical and the right is creative. We know that everyone has both left and right brain hemispheres but if we are more dominant left than right it will be different in the way we view information and make decisions from the right.

Taking it a step further we now break the two sides of the brain down into the quadrants seen above. We can see from each quadrant the unique differences and strengths each have. It makes sense that Greens fall into careers that requires detail such as scientists or engineers and Golds into positions with structure and organization such as CPA's, lawyers and CEO's. We can see the creativity in Blues that are natural with music and strong people interaction such as human resource workers and counselors and Oranges in the fields of sales, firemen and construction. We can also anticipate preferences in certain behaviors based on the picture of the brain.

When it comes to communication Greens prefer succinct and to the point conversation while Golds prefer an agenda and a clear understanding of the expectations for the meeting. Oranges and Blues being right brained enjoy socializing and small talk. Oranges prefer to do the talking and Blues like balanced interaction. Greens being inquisitive have a strong desire to acquire information and typically ask the most questions. Golds are known to be good listeners.

In the world of selling a critical element is how buyers make decisions. When qualifying the customer a key element is asking when and how they will be making their decision. The "how" is critical and we can get a leg up on our competition by understanding what is important to each color as it relates to decision making. We believe that there are four factors that are most important when making a business decision. They are total cost of ownership, quality, capability and service. Each color tends to lean towards two of these factors. Let's look at some key characteristics for each of the colors:

- Blues are slower in making decisions and do not have a sense of urgency in bringing things to closure. They work on consensus and want to make sure they have buy-in on the decision. Blues make decisions based on how they feel more so than on logic. Being right brained they will focus on the subjective points and the intangibles. They also value quality and service and typically will avoid anything that is high risk.

- Golds need a reason to buy. They will focus on the financials more than the other colors when making their decision. What will the return on investment be? How will it impact the revenue or the bottom line? What are the expectations when making the investment and how will the solution perform. Golds are very structured and will make their decision with a method in place and a predictable timeline in making their decision. Being left brained they will be objective and consider the tangibles of the solution. Golds will emphasize the total cost of ownership and the quality. Golds will assess the risk when they make a decision.
- Greens are also slower to make a decision and bring things to closure but for different reasons than the Blues. For Greens it's about having all the information gathered and research before they make their decision. Greens look for the state of the art characteristics in a solution and tend to emphasize quality and capability. Since they are innovative they look into the future to see how the solution will integrate with other systems down the road. Being left brained that also look for the specifics and data in making a logical decision that is objective and has tangible results. Greens will calculate the risk involved in a decision.
- Oranges are impulsive in nature and tend to be the quickest when making a decision. Oranges look for the immediate benefits when making a purchase and emphasize the cost and the service. Oranges are also bottom line driven and since they are competitive they will negotiate most of the time. Oranges want to look good when making a decision and will focus on what the solution will do to gain competitive advantages and win. They are also subjective and focus on the intangibles. What will it do for our market share or speed of execution? Oranges have no problem taking risk.

When it comes to making decisions we all weigh our decision on both the business level of the decision and the personal which is what will it do for me personally like get a promotion, gain recognition or get a raise. Golds and Greens lean more to the business reasons being left brained and Blues and Oranges will lean more towards the personal reasons.

When looking at the selling styles of each personality we see a common theme for what is important to each color. Blues tend to sell themselves and their personality by building long term relationships with the customer. Golds prefer to sell the company, its reputation and the track record. Greens sell the solutions and are best at developing the best possible approach to solving the customer's issues. Oranges focus on beating the competition and sell the immediate impact of the benefits of the solution.

When we understand the characteristics of each of the four personality styles and we identify the customer's primary color, we increase our chances of shortening the sales cycle and increase our win rate. The bottom line is superior sales results for the entire sales team. We can now develop a winning strategy based on the personality style of the customer. This adds a whole new dimension in the selling process that training companies have

considered but have had a hard time implementing due to the difficulty of identifying one's primary personality style. As one practices and asks the right questions the odds of identifying the customer's color increases dramatically.

The best way to identify the personality style of the customer is to ask some questions around what they value. You can also gain hints from their communication style, their decision making style, whether they are big picture or detail oriented and what they prefer when it comes to being objective or subjective. We find that one of the best questions to ask is "When it comes to purchasing .... What is most important to you?"

When we take personality into account it heightens our awareness to improve our emotional intelligence. We can now take into consideration the customer's preference to how they prefer to interact which helps us understand how they like to be approached giving us a greater ability to connect to what's important to them and not to us. We can better manage our emotions the customer relationship with this new dimension in selling.

**"75%** of careers are derailed for reasons related to emotional competencies, including inability to handle interpersonal problems; unsatisfactory team leadership during times of difficulty or conflict; or inability to adapt to change or elicit trust." — The Center for Creative Leadership, 1994

*Stu Schlackman is a sales expert with over 20 years of success which he shares with his clients and audiences through the Sales Intelligence System. To learn more about how to achieve Superior Sales Results, access valuable articles on proven sales strategies, sign up for The Competitive-Excellence newsletter and purchase Stu's books Four People You Should Know and Don't Just Stand There, Sell Something, visit [www.competitive-excellence.com](http://www.competitive-excellence.com) or email Stu at [stu@competitive-excellence.com](mailto:stu@competitive-excellence.com).*