

**1. When making sales calls on existing customers, I make it a point to:**

- A.** Visit as many accounts in a particular geographic area as possible so as to minimize travel, time and expense.
- B.** “Go where the action is” by responding to customer requests or emergencies.
- C.** Call on customers according to potential or estimated account volume, even if it means making long trips between customers and seeing fewer accounts.

**2. When my company introduces a new product or service, or a new or enhanced capability, I try to get the word out to my accounts by:**

- A.** Visiting them on a regularly scheduled basis and then making sure everyone at each account gets the appropriate information.
- B.** Immediately calling on those accounts that are likely to have the greatest need for our new offering.
- C.** Identifying those accounts with the highest probable need for the product or service and then targeting them for a call on my next scheduled visit.

**3. When developing a sales call itinerary, I find it works best to:**

- A.** Plan appointments about a month in advance because that way I’ve got enough lead time to manipulate my schedule so I can see everyone in an area.
- B.** Plan appointments a few days in advance so that I can go where the action is and accommodate any opportunities or emergencies that might arise.
- C.** Plan appointments on a monthly basis so that well in advance I’ll have a good idea of where I’ll be going and who I’ll be seeing.

**4. When planning sales calls on new prospects, I like to:**

- A.** Work them in with the other accounts I would see in the same geographic area on my next scheduled visit.
- B.** Begin calling on those prospects who I feel are most likely to be receptive and willing to see me.
- C.** Estimate their potential as best I can and then call on the highest potential prospects first.

**SKILL ASSESSMENT**

**5. When I receive sales leads from my customers, I make it a point to:**

- A.** Ensure that they are included among the accounts I would call on in a specific geographic area.
- B.** Immediately follow up on every lead to show that I really appreciate the assistance.
- C.** Identify the accounts with the greatest perceived need for my products or services and schedule them for an appointment on my next trip to their area.

**6. At the conclusion of a face-to-face sales call, I make a point to:**

- A.** Jot down a few notes about the call to serve as a reminder of what we discussed.
- B.** Reflect on what the client and I discussed and make a mental note of the key points covered during the conversation.
- C.** Write down in detail what the customer and I discussed as well as possible future actions to pursue with the customer. ▶



**Instructions**

- Read the first situation in the questionnaire. On the chart at the right, circle the letter of the response alternative you choose for that situation. Repeat for all 18 situations. Circle only *one* choice for each situation. Press hard, as your responses are being recorded on the sheet below.
- Please do not read the interpretive material that follows until you have completed the inventory or have been instructed to continue.
- After you have made your choices for all 18 situations, separate this two-part form and follow the scoring instructions on the next page.

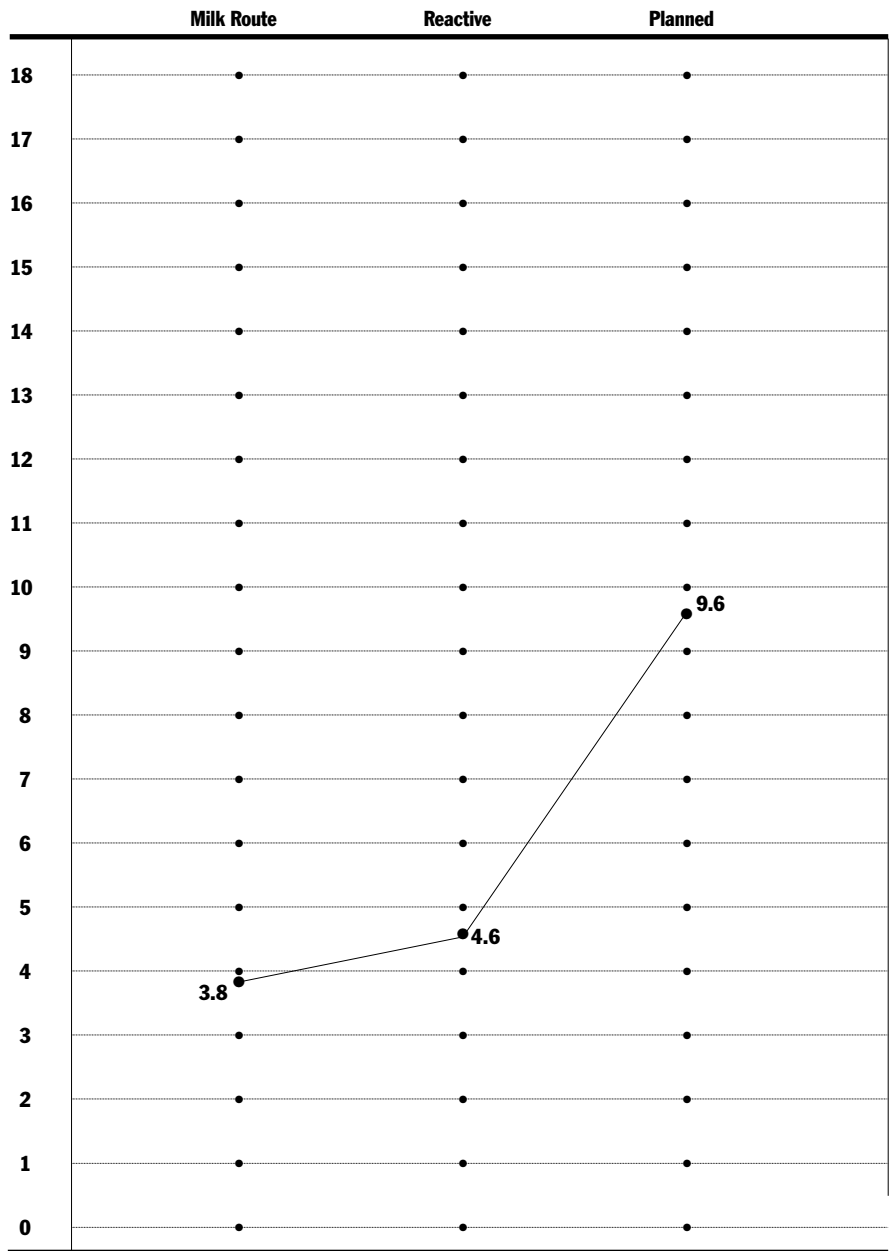
Situations	Choice		
	A	B	C
1.	A	B	C
2.	A	B	C
3.	A	B	C
4.	A	B	C
5.	A	B	C
6.	A	B	C
7.	A	B	C
8.	A	B	C
9.	A	B	C
10.	A	B	C
11.	A	B	C
12.	A	B	C
13.	A	B	C
14.	A	B	C
15.	A	B	C
16.	A	B	C
17.	A	B	C
18.	A	B	C



## TERRITORY MANAGEMENT STYLE PREFERENCE PROFILE

### Instructions

- Using your column totals from the Scoring Form on page 9, circle the appropriate number in each column of the matrix at the right.
- Next, draw a line to connect the circled numbers. This line is a profile of your use of the three approaches to managing the accounts in your sales territory.
- So you can compare your scores with others who have completed this inventory, averages are shown by the plotted line.



In this case, the rep might use a Planned approach to schedule visits with all the high and moderate potential accounts in his or her territory and a Milk Route approach to fill out his or her appointment schedules. On the other hand, another sales rep who is also effectively managing his or her territory, but has his or her accounts concentrated in a small geographic area would likely have a profile that has a high Planned score, a low Milk Route score and a moderate Reactive score. In this case, the rep would also use a Planned approach to schedule visits with all his or her high and moderate potential accounts, but might leave time in his or her appointment schedule to respond to major problems or opportunities that might arise.

If you have scores that fall into either the “very high” or “very low” categories, turn to the Diagnostic Questions beginning at the right and review the questions associated with the particular style. These questions will help you gain further insight into your approach to managing the accounts in your sales territory, and help you identify things you might want to change about your approach.

**Diagnostic Questions**

Refer back to your Territory Management Style Preference Profile on page 11 of this booklet and the Effectiveness Score Ranges chart on the preceding page. If you have scores that fall into either the “very high” or “very low” categories, the following questions will help you gain additional insight into your possible over-use or under-use of these approaches in managing the accounts in your sales territory, and identify areas for improvement.

**Milk Route**

*If you scored very high:*

1. Do you view all accounts as being equal and one sale just as good as another? *(Remember, you only have a finite amount of time to spend with customers. So treat the investment of this time just as you would a financial investment. Allocate it to those accounts where you're likely to get the biggest return.)*
2. Do you regard all your customers as friends who are each deserving of the same amount of your time and attention? *(Working to develop all your customers as friends can be a definite advantage. But the fact remains that some customers are more valuable to you and your company than others and they should receive more time and attention.)*

3. Are you making regular sales calls on some accounts either to look busy or meet a sales call quota established by your manager? *(While looking busy and meeting your manager's call quota are “politically correct” things to do, you likely would be more productive if you concentrated your calling efforts on your high and moderate potential accounts. Consider asking your manager for a temporary reprieve [two or three months] from the need to look busy and meet call quotas in order to demonstrate that you could be more successful using a different approach.)*

*If you scored very low:*

1. Do you sometimes miss sales opportunities in some of your accounts, or find out about them too late to establish a clear competitive advantage? *(Failing to check with each of your accounts occasionally to find out what's coming up can result in your missing sales opportunities, or in discovering them so late that you're positioned as just another supplier who is under consideration.)*
2. Do you frequently have scheduling gaps in your appointment calendar that end up as wasted time? *(Scheduling gaps are good places to work in routine visits on moderate and low potential accounts.)*



**The Three Territory Management Styles**

Territory management skills are important because the old “numbers game” approach of “make enough sales calls and you are certain to succeed” no longer holds true in today’s competitive selling environment. Effective territory management means getting in front of high and moderate potential customers and prospects with optimum frequency and maintaining or acquiring a targeted share of their business. It also means recognizing that all accounts are not created equal and targeting the majority of all calling efforts on those accounts with the highest potential.

There are three possible approaches a sales rep can employ in managing the accounts in their sales territory: Milk Route, Reactive and Planned. Following are descriptions of each style. Regardless of your scores, you will likely find the information in the reading useful. But pay special attention to styles where you scored either “very high” or “very low.” After completing the reading, turn to the Improvement Ideas on page 16 of this booklet and start planning how you can improve the way you manage the accounts in your sales territory.

**Milk Route**

Sales reps who use a Milk Route approach to manage the accounts in their territory tend to follow a defined route and attempt to see every customer and prospect in the territory on a regularly scheduled basis. Moreover, they regard all accounts as essentially equal, and try to give every customer and prospect the same level of attention. In short, they make no attempt to separate accounts according to potential, nor to identify which high and moderate potential accounts are most in need of their time and attention.

**Reactive**

Sales reps who manage their accounts using a Reactive approach tend to leapfrog across their sales territory from one account to another, pursuing opportunities, solving problems, resolving emergencies and following up on customer requests. They also rely on instinct to determine which customers and prospects require attention and which can be placed on the back burner. In short, instead of separating accounts by potential and identifying those most in need of thoughtful planning, they give their attention to the accounts that squeal the loudest.

**Planned**

Sales reps who use a Planned approach to manage their accounts tend to allocate calls on customers and prospects to their potential. They don’t consider all accounts as equal, but instead discriminate among accounts according to their desirability or potential payback. In short, they allocate more time and attention to their most desirable accounts — those that offer the greatest payback.

Research shows that for most sales reps, 65 percent of their sales volume comes from about 15 percent of their customers, while another 20 percent of their customers contribute an additional 20 percent of their sales volume. This means that approximately 35 percent of a sales rep’s customers are responsible for 85 percent of the rep’s total sales volume. On the flip side, it also means that 65 percent of a sales rep’s customers account for only 15 percent of total sales volume.

The trick, of course, is knowing which customers and prospects fall into the top 15 percent category, which fall into the middle 20 percent, and which fall into the bottom 65 percent. Separating customers and prospects into these three categories serves to distinguish desirable and highly desirable accounts from those that do not meet the criteria for establishing or expanding a relationship.



## Improvement Ideas

The *Territory Management Style*

*Inventory* provides an in-depth assessment of your approach to managing the accounts in your sales territory.

With this in mind, the next question becomes: “What can I do to improve my scores (e.g. what scores would you like to see increased or decreased)?”

While there is no one best answer, the following improvement suggestions are offered to help you develop a plan for charting your improvement.

In addition, you are advised to turn back to the inventory itself and carefully re-read the response alternatives related to any style you would like to change because you feel your score is too high or too low. The response alternatives that make up the scale may help you think of additional improvement ideas.

After you have reviewed the ideas that follow and the response alternatives making up the scale(s), turn to page 18, *Analyzing Your Profile*, and complete the Action Planning exercise to help you identify some concrete steps for your own development.

## Milk Route

*If you scored too high:*

1. On at least an annual basis, take all your accounts (customers and prospects) and separate the desirable and highly desirable accounts from those that don't warrant establishing or expanding your relationship.
2. Discuss with your sales manager the criteria that should be used to separate the accounts in your sales territory into high, moderate and low potential categories.
3. When scheduling account visits in your sales territory, concentrate first on setting appointments with high and moderate potential accounts, then fill out your schedule with low priority accounts.

*If you scored too low:*

1. Use phone calls and other forms of communication to make regular contact with all your accounts, but focus your face-to-face calling efforts on high and moderate potential accounts only.
2. Set up a “mailing program” where on a regularly scheduled basis (e.g. weekly, monthly, bi-monthly) you send all your accounts a copy of a newspaper, magazine or trade journal article you've found that relates to their industry along with your business card and a personal note.

## BACKGROUND READING

### Reactive

*If you scored too high:*

1. Ask your sales manager to give you regular feedback on how your cost of sales (travel and entertainment) compares to other sales reps within the company, and set a goal to be in the bottom half.
2. On a quarterly, monthly or weekly basis, set aside time to plan out an appointment schedule for the upcoming period that targets your high and moderate potential accounts, and reward yourself each time you do it.
3. Ask your sales manager to give you feedback every time he or she feels your approach to account management is more reactive than planned.

*If you scored too low:*

1. Leave gaps in your appointment schedule so that if opportunities suddenly present themselves or customer emergencies arise, you can immediately respond to them.
2. Set some performance standards to guide your behavior in following up on customer requests (e.g., return all customer phone calls within 4 hours; resolve all customer concerns and problems within 3 days).

