BUILDING THE SALES FORCE OF THE FUTURE

USING DATA AND ANALYTICS TO SELECT, COACH, AND BUILD AN INTELLIGENT SALES FORCE

AuctusIQ
Smart Selling

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ON A BRIGHT FALL MORNING over breakfast in the Nashville train station, I had a memorable conversation with the CEO of one of my favorite clients. He shared a perspective I had been hearing over and over from the heads of growth-minded companies:

"What I really need is a crystal ball to look into my organization and see if my people have what it takes and are ready to accelerate the future growth of our business."

THE CURRENT STATE OF SALES

Most sales leaders are painfully aware that selling today is more difficult than ever. Sales are flat and sales leaders often don't know how to help their people. The talents and skills required to win have evolved, and the old ways of doing things just aren't cutting it. With more influencers, longer selling cycles, and buyers becoming more knowledgeable with access to online resources, sales organizations are struggling to predict performance and enable their people to grow, hit quota, and realize success.

Even though sales talent is one of the most imperative assets of an organization and one of the largest costs to the bottom line, most heads of sales are missing critical metrics to evaluate their talent and enable the capacity and readiness of their people to succeed. Sales leaders don't know what they don't know.

YOUR CRYSTAL BALL

Through decades of empirical research, AuctusIQ data scientists have uncovered the power of these missing metrics to propel the success of companies and sales leaders. Sales leaders crave the visibility and insight revealed through these metrics: how their teams are spending their time, and which of their behaviors, skills, decisions, and activities result in a sale. This predictive data is your sales intelligence. It is your crystal ball illuminating the leading indicators to realize future growth through your people.

My partner, Troy Kanter, former president of Kenexa, and I recognized the void of sales intelligence available to sales organizations. We founded AuctusIQ to offer you a sales business process that applies predictive analytics to teach sales organizations exactly what sales leaders and teams need to do to prepare and optimize their talent assets to accelerate growth with certainty. With 30 years of studying top performers in sales and sales leadership roles, AuctusIQ has refined the questions to ask to measure most accurately and reliably what matters most to winning sales and leading sales teams.

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THE EVOLVING SUCCESS PROFILE FOR SELLING

Sales organizations need to adjust their talent to win. Prospective and existing customers expect more from their sales representatives. Customers choose to engage and sustain relationships with sellers who become trusted advisors and add value that helps them improve their businesses. With these evolving expectations, the profile of the sellers who succeed also has changed.

Top sellers today demonstrate more than the traditional talent of building relationships and the aggressive drive to compete. While the high-performing sales professionals are still classic rainmakers, the shrewdest swimmers who survive turbulent waters and bring additional critical talent capacity, increased sales competency, and better data intelligence.

INCREASED TALENT & COMPETENCY REQUIREMENTS

Ambition, persistence, focus, courage, responsibility, discipline, and relationship have always been fundamentally important to sales success. These talents are the seller's predictive capacity to performance that define the age-old concept of a shark — an aggressive go-getter who will persist to the close.

Initiating new relationships, exhibiting follow-through, and moving a buyer to action are all core patterns to success that continue to emerge in empirical AuctusIQ studies. However, they simply are not enough. With sales becoming increasingly complex and buyer expectations growing, the success profiles for sales and sales leadership roles have evolved.

Talent performance studies conducted by AuctusIQ have uncovered a rising benchmark of the average scores of the predictive talents shared by the best. These studies of thousands of sales participants have found that the top-performing sellers bring:

- **INCREASED ABILITY TO ACCELERATE THROUGH RESISTANCE**
- **CURIOSITY TO SEEK OUT BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE**
- **BUSINESS ACUMEN TO ANALYZE FINANCIAL DATA**
- **EXPERT ABILITY TO ADVISE BUYERS ON THE INSIGHTS THEY NEED TO DELIVER ON THEIR PRIORITY BUSINESS OUTCOMES**

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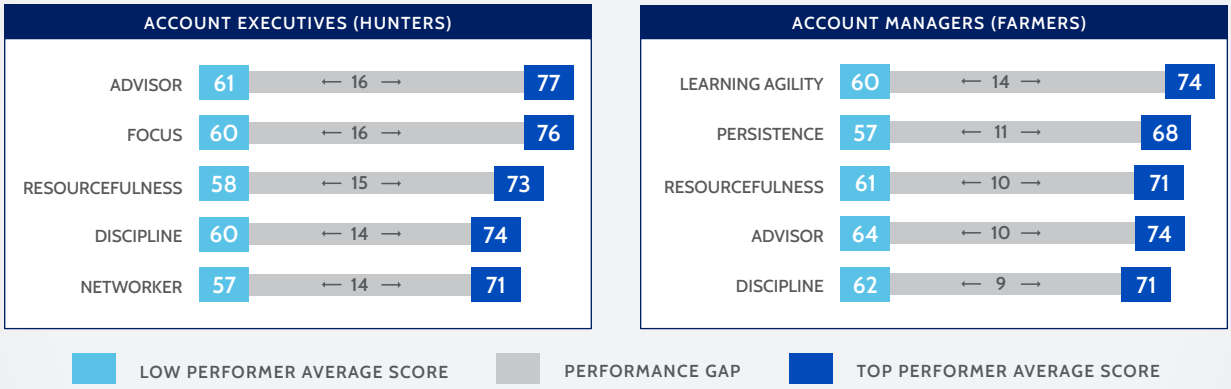
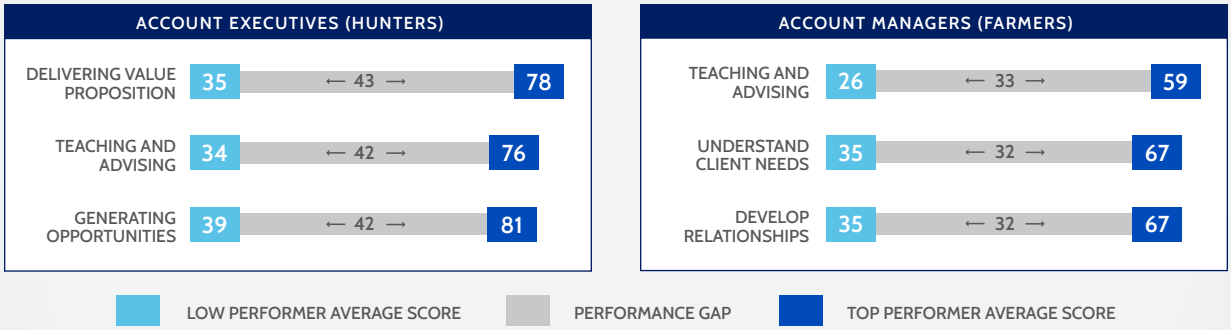
THE SUMMARY BELOW illustrates results from a study conducted by AuctusIQ to accelerate the performance of 185 Account Executives and 193 Account Managers for a global sales organization. The AuctusIQ sales talents and competencies measured exhibit a strong, significant correlation to the top performers at the company, and the top five talents that most differentiate the top-performing groups for each role are consistent with the most predictive talents found for Account Executives (Hunters) and Account Managers (Farmers) across multiple AuctusIQ studies, client organizations, and industries.

TOP TALENTS PREDICTING PERFORMANCE



The tables below highlight the results from the same study of the top three most predictive competencies for each role. The large, statistically significant effect size (difference) between the top and bottom performance groups illustrates how much these competencies explain the success of the best. In short, by developing these competencies, based upon the specific skills measured by AuctusIQ assessments, this company will have an exponential impact on improving sales results.

TOP COMPETENCIES PREDICTING PERFORMANCE



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THE AUCTUSIQ PLATFORM: PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS ILLUMINATE HOW TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR SALES FORCE

The AuctusIQ platform provides an integrated sales dashboard with the talent and competency data for your sales force, along with the activities and results of every seller across the enterprise. Together, the AuctusIQ platform and sales training academy enable sales leaders to deliver effective performance coaching that facilitates focus and accountability for sales teams around high-impact sales activity and skill development for predictable results.

TALENTIQ

Sales talent and competency predictive assessment

DEALIQ

Deal management methodology and software

RECRUITIQ

24/7 sales-only recruiting expertise

PERFORMANCEIQ

Data-driven sales transformation

MEASURING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SALES READINESS

To measure an organization's sales readiness, AuctusIQ evaluates how each seller maps against the most critical talents and competencies for his/her role in sales through a Sales Readiness Audit. The weighted composite score is that seller's Readiness Index.

Once the sales organization has completed their predictive talent and competency assessments, AuctusIQ maps out an accurate perspective of their immediate state of readiness and current level of performance, so leaders have a clear view of who has the most potential, who needs competency development, and who needs coaching. This generates a development journey map of how to help every seller optimize their personal performance for increased growth.

With an understanding of their leading talents and gap competencies, a personalized playbook and action plan is delivered to help companies move their people from their current state towards the next level to exceptional performance. From this single collective view, AuctusIQ delivers a strategic talent road map for each readiness group that reveals how to align, coach, train, and track their progress across the sales organization to increase competency and accelerate growth.

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A SALES READINESS CASE STUDY

A global, B2B sales organization with more than 500 sales incumbents started their journey with AuctusIQ through a Sales Readiness Audit. This organization was experiencing the headwinds of a more complex sales landscape with an increased number of influencers to navigate the sale and more buyers seeking a trusted advisor relationship. The audit revealed a complete view of the entire sales organization, depicting both a macro and a micro view of each individual.

Below is a summary of Readiness Results for the 114 Sales Consultants across the sales organization. Each dot represents the state of readiness at time of analysis and performance for the period defined. In this case, two years of percent bonus attainment based upon performance evaluations were applied to plot average annual performance for each Sales Consultant on the Y-Axis. Their responses to the series of AuctusIQ Talent & Competency Inventory questions were scored against the AuctusIQ Sales Consultant Profile to generate a Readiness Score for each participant on the X-Axis.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

NARROW PATH PERFORMERS

These salespeople have figured out how to perform, but they have limits to their readiness in terms of talents and competencies. The solution is to develop them through building their competencies so they can improve and sustain their performance.

HIGH PERFORMERS

Every company wants to replicate and retain these salespeople. These are the individuals you want to model your salesforce of the future on.

MISPLACED UNDERPERFORMERS

Salespeople in this quadrant consistently underperform. Misplaced Potentials either need to be recast in a new role that better fits their talents and competencies, or put on a path of improved performance by training them and closing their competency gaps.

COACHABLE POTENTIALS

These salespeople are ready and highly likely to perform well, but their current performance lags. With the appropriate coaching, Coachable Potentials can quickly elevate their performance.

READINESS INDEX

Talent & Competencies

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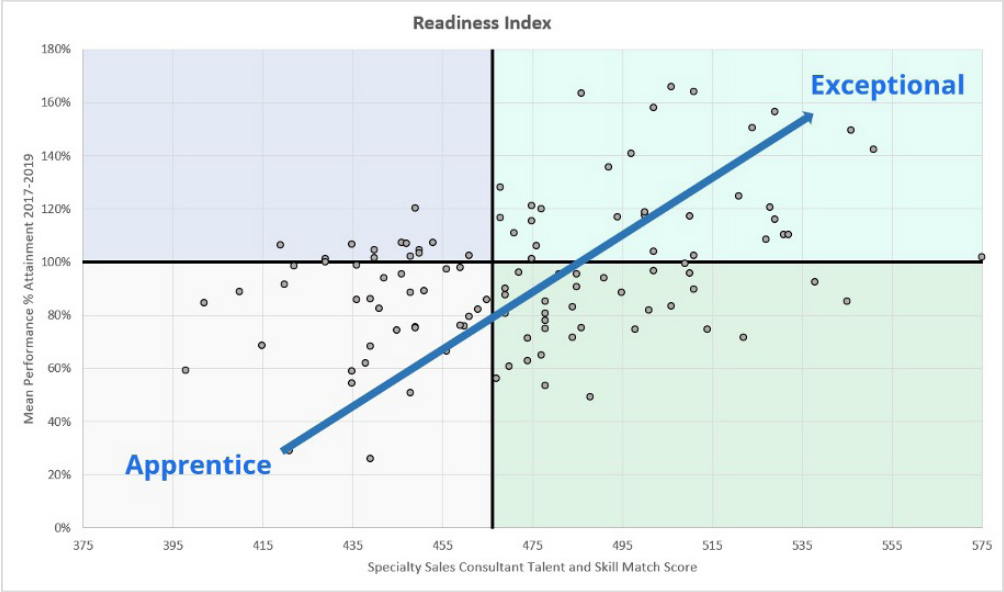
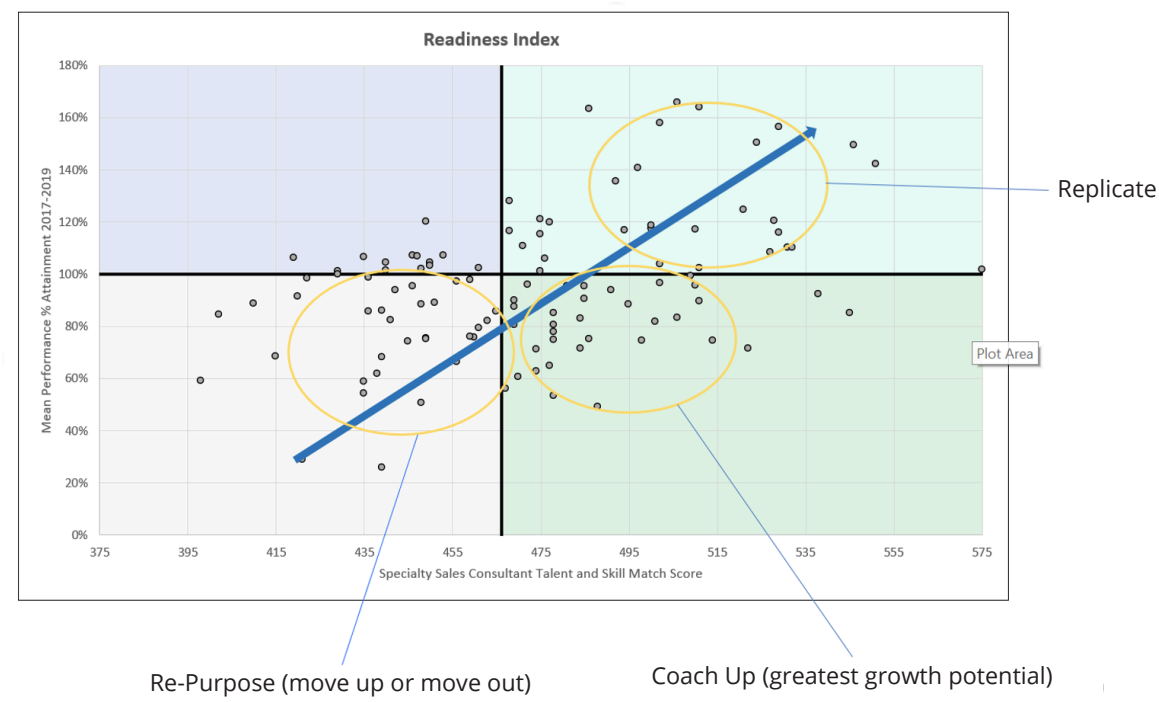


Based upon the quadrant where each participant mapped, the appropriate talent development strategy was applied to lift performance through increasing readiness. Below is an overview of how data was mapped. Results were applied to increase readiness and accelerated performance results for both low- and high-performing groups within the same role.



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Readiness Index Results (Talent + Competency)	Sample Distribution *Approximate (Total N = 153)	Year 1 Average Total Revenue per Sales Consultant (US Dollars)	Year 2 Average Total Revenue per Sales Consultant (US Dollars)	Mean 2-Year Average Revenue Across Sample (US Dollars)
Low Readiness Group	32	$7,219,899	$8,538,474	$7,879,157
Moderate Readiness Group	88	$10,206,381	$11,571,560	$10,888,899
High Readiness Group	33	$13,298,043	$15,620,069	$14,459,056

In addition, if you compare the High and Low Groups on the Readiness Index, the High Readiness Group outperformed the Low Readiness Group by 92%, delivering approximately $465.7 million more in revenue for the business during the two-year period.

Readiness Index Results (Talent + Competency)	Sample Distribution *Approximate (Total N = 153)	Total 2-Year Revenue By Low/High Readiness Group (US Dollars in Millions)
Low Readiness Group	32	$504.3M
High Readiness Group	33	$970.0M

MEASURING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SALES TALENT

The universal truth about talent is that we each bring natural patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that become our path of least resistance to find success in the right role. If we can intimately understand what explains high performance within a role and measure the things that matter most, we can help people find a job where they have the greatest capacity to succeed, use their personal profile to create their unique playbook to success, and train to the individual skills and knowledge most critical to success within the role.

AUCTUSIQ SALES ASSESSMENTS measure the natural talents, learned competencies, and sales acumen that most contribute to performance, then uniquely weight those attributes that have greater predictive power within a target organizational culture.

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IT STARTS WITH HIRING FOR TALENT AND CULTURE FIT

There was a time when hiring salespeople was a high-stakes gamble. Even sophisticated companies would hire nearly everyone who applied with limited selection criteria or screening, then simply fire those who didn't cut it. As part of a sales research study I led with three auto giants, one CEO described the cut-throat sales culture in painfully vivid words:

"It's like putting a bunch of cockroaches in a jar, shaking the jar, and seeing who comes out on top."

Over the course of my 25-year career, I have spoken to thousands of CEOs and sales leaders, while researching, studying, and gathering data on high-performing sales professionals. I still find many companies that apply this primitive guesswork approach, which not only sets up a portion of an organization to fail, but is also extremely costly to customers and shareholders. These companies typically don't quantify the time, effort, and dollars wasted by not applying predictive assessments in hiring or holding out for top talent.

Sometimes the guesswork method works, and a company ends up with the smartest seller in the industry. The problem is that luck is incredibly hard to replicate. The intelligent approach to hiring the right person begins with assessing the seller's combination of innate talent, acquired skills, and acumen. It's also the ability to predict the seller's actions under certain pressure situations.

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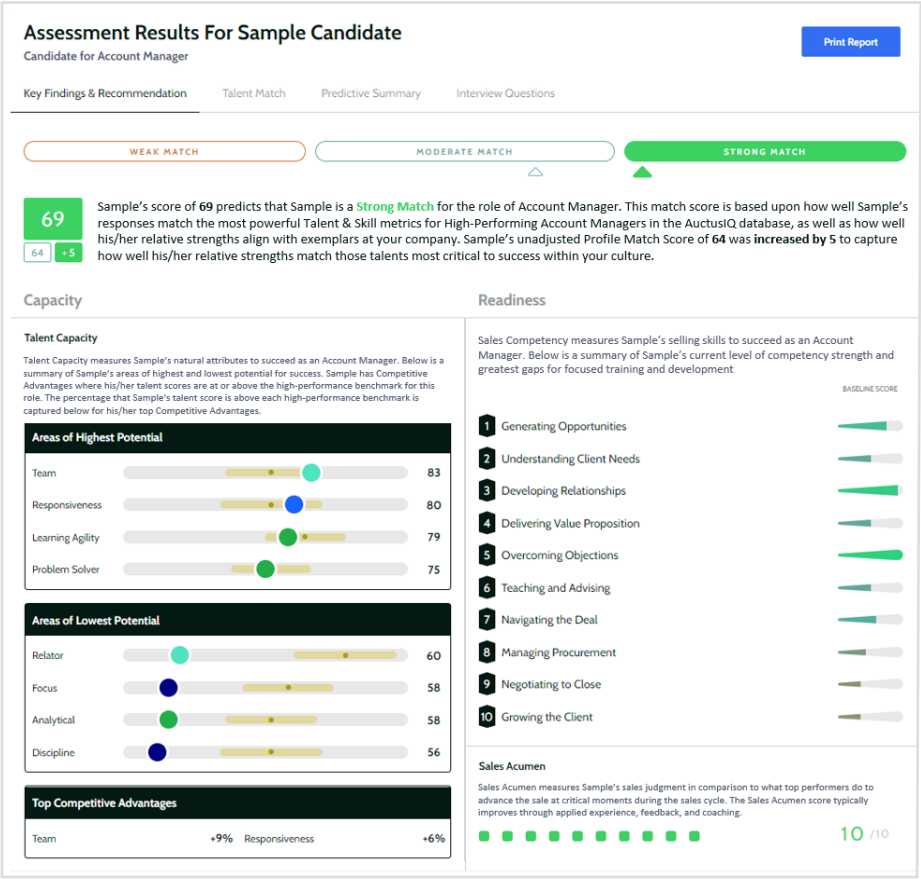
HOW DOES AUCTUSIQ HELP?

Immediately upon a sales candidate's completion of the AuctusIQ Sales Talent & Competency Assessments, recruiters and hiring managers have access to the candidate's overall fit for the role, derived from the assessment questions and scoring analytics refined across thousands of sales professionals within the hiring profile.

In addition, a quick snapshot of high- and low-scoring talents and top competitive talent advantages compared to the AuctusIQ Global Performance Benchmark is provided, along with the candidate's current readiness against the most predictive sales competencies. From this overview, hiring managers can drill down for more detail through a full Talent Summary and Predictive Narrative, which explains what to expect and how to set the new hire up to shorten their time to productivity.



FILLING THE VOID WITH SALES INTELLIGENCE

To improve your sales competency and readiness, sales professionals need performance data and feedback. The beauty of sales is that the real-time objective data that sits inside a company's CRM (customer relationship management system) contains feedback that accurately measures the success of the seller. When connected to the seller, this feedback allows us to definitively measure results, deliver feedback, and track improvement. The problem is that the data in the CRM does not typically bring intelligence back to help the seller sell better.

Sales competency is developed through training, coaching, and on-the-job experiences of what works and what doesn't. The mean scores of top performers on the AuctusIQ predictive sales competencies have increased over the last three years. In short, because selling is more complex, you need to know more than you did before to effectively target prospects, develop relationships, navigate the deal, overcome objections, and negotiate to close. The AuctusIQ training academy and software system delivers the best methods and feedback to train your sellers with the sale intelligence needed to grow your business.

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FUTURE-PROOF YOUR SALES FORCE WITH HIGH-IMPACT TALENTS AND CAPABILITIES

Our findings over the last few years support the premise that as you transform to an intelligent sales force, there are additional talents you need to focus on in hiring, onboarding, and coaching for results. Not only has the AuctusIQ global benchmarks of top performer average scores for these talents increased, but so has the size of the differences between the top-performing and bottom performing groups increased. In short, there is a bigger gap between the best and the rest on these talents than ever before.

If you want to have a competitive advantage, these are the high-impact talents to focus your talent transformation on as you hire, engage, coach, and retain talent. These talents demonstrate an increasingly strong, significant correlation to sellers in the top 20% performance group.

LEARNING AGILITY: Intellectual curiosity that pushes sellers to seek out critical information, turning them into experts about what they're selling, their buyers, and their buyers' businesses. This talent enables sellers to continually develop their value through meaningful data to proactively inform buyers about relevant trends and growth strategies for their businesses.

ANALYTICAL: An ability to analyze data from multiple sources and understand its implications on the buyers and their businesses. This talent enables sellers to build a compelling business case to project how their solution will benefit buyers in reaching target business objectives.

INDIVIDUALIZER & ADAPTABILITY: Capable of intimately understanding and adapting to the unique needs of buyers. These talents help sellers uncover the personal purpose and goals of the buyer and modify their company's solution to their evolving customer priorities.

ADVISOR: Teaching through relevant input, feedback, and intelligence, along with valuable insights to reach their desired goals. This talent positions sellers as expert resources for a trusted advisor relationship with customers over time.

RESOURCEFULNESS: Having the capacity to find creative solutions to overcome obstacles and meet your clients' needs. This talent enables sellers to remove barriers and overcome objections to close.

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IN ADDITION TO expanding the strengths profile of your talent pool, you also need to feed your sellers the data intelligence, skills training, and performance feedback they need to adjust their deal strategy to increase deal velocity and win rates. Because the sale is more complex, you are at a critical disadvantage if you don't have the action analytics and buyer data you need at every step of the sales process.

Sellers need to develop their complex sales competencies and need ongoing feedback on any critical knowledge or skill gaps that are inhibiting their success. With feedback on a 180-review of these predictive sales competencies, both the sales leader and seller have visibility to know what the seller needs to do to advance each opportunity, where the risks are to winning, and how to adjust based upon the intelligence from the system.

AuctusIQ has isolated 10 core predictive sales competencies, listed on the previous page, that most consistently predict the top performers across direct sales roles. Of these predictive competencies, the differences between top and bottom sales performance groups have increased over the last two years, and the size of significant effect between groups has most increased across all 10 competencies.

If you're looking for a proven way to energize your sales force, let's talk.

"Auctus" is Latin for growth. "IQ" means smarts. Combined, AuctusIQ means smart growth. AuctusIQ is a sales data and science company. Our mission is to provide the right data, on a technology platform that allows you to put talent in your tech stack. Doing this solves your three biggest challenges: selecting and retaining exceptional talent, coaching to ensure readiness to meet or beat quota, and most importantly making sure everything you do is tied to winning more deals.

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