

## **Skills and Abilities of Call Center Superstars**

What are the skills and abilities of superstar call center representatives? LIMRA International recently completed a detailed job analysis or job profiling project to answer this question. The multiyear project ultimately was used to develop call center employment tests designed to help call centers hire top performers for their sales and service centers — and to avoid the costly results of poor hiring decisions.

The first step of success profiling was to focus on understanding the representative's job and its key competencies. LIMRA's strategy was to "drill down" further to determine what defines success in the call center environment and identify the critical skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that underlie this success.

LIMRA studied a full range of call center representatives — from low performers to high performers. The research employed several job analysis methods, such as management and incumbent interviews, site observations, and a comprehensive job analysis survey.

The information yielded a competency model that classified a variety of tasks, behaviors, skills, and personal characteristics according to time spent, importance, and criticality.

Competencies needed for job success include:

- Ability to learn quickly
- Analytic reasoning
- Multitasking skills
- Social orientation
- Service orientation
- Sales orientation (sales centers)
- Speed/urgency for call volume
- Attention to detail/accuracy
- Phone skills/conversation control
- Productive with repetition and stress
- Flexibility/adaptability
- Resolution of problems independently
- Communication skills
- PC and data entry skills
- Need to meet goals

Other factors critical for job success are:

- Success in initial training
- Retention (low turnover risk)

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LIMRA International is an applied research organization focusing on human resource issues within contact centers. LIMRA has developed the ExSel selection system for job applicant assessment to recruit and retain the best people for sales and service positions. For more information, visit [www.contactcenter.limra.com](http://www.contactcenter.limra.com).

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