

Separating the Best from the Rest

The Traits that Distinguish Top Performers
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

The Berke Group has released its initial findings in a series of studies on the core personality traits and talents separating top and bottom performers. Utilizing the Berke Assessment, The Berke Group's team of experts worked with participating companies to determine the key behavioral and talent characteristics separating the "best from the rest" for select roles. The Berke Group's analysis was designed to equip hiring managers with an understanding of the behavioral and talent attributes necessary for success so that they can make better selection decisions.

The Berke Group's first study focused on top and bottom performers in the home-building industry. Over the last two years, The Berke Group conducted a systematic evaluation of the characteristics of top performers in 12 key positions at 49 home-building companies throughout the United States.

Our goal was to answer the following core questions:

- What key behavioral and talent characteristics separate top performers from bottom performers in the homebuilding industry?
- How can managers identify candidates with the attributes necessary for success?

Key Findings

Key study findings include:

Performance is Predictable: After studying 3000 homebuilding professionals, we found that for each job studied, top-performing employees consistently shared behavioral traits and talents that are markedly different from average performers. Our analysis was position- and company-specific. Within a given company, for example, we found that a group of superintendents who were considered top performers by their managers all shared a common set of talents and personality traits. Average superintendents, on the other hand, differed substantially from their top-performing peers. In another example, we found that top-performing salespeople who shared a common set of personality traits out-sold their average-performing peers by a margin of 3 to 1. The conclusion is that top performers often share a common set of traits that can be identified and are significantly predictive of job performance.

Manager Bias: We found that managers frequently don't know which behaviors and talents are critical for success in a given role. Even hiring specialists were frequently mistaken about the importance of certain behaviors and talents based on the positions for which they were hiring. A contributing factor was the fact that most managers had a strong bias toward their own personality and problem-solving type. While this is a natural tendency, it often results in hiring people who are not a behavioral match with the requirements of a job, resulting in employees who perform at less than acceptable levels.

Know What You Are Looking For: Top performers have a different set of talents and personality traits than average performers. The Berke Group's research consistently demonstrated that companies and managers who set clear job targets, administered assessments, and used structured interview techniques to identify behavioral matches hired employees who perform at higher levels.

Method

Data for the study was collected from 49 homebuilding companies varying in size. Over 3000 homebuilding industry professionals participated in the study. The data collected included Berke Assessment Reports, Job Definitions, Phone Interviews, Confidential Surveys and Ratings of Performance. Performance metrics included an overall rating of employee performance provided by participating managers in addition to both quantitative and qualitative measures.

The Instrument

Each of the 3000 participants in the study completed the Berke Assessment. The Berke Assessment measures an individual's personality and talent variables compared to the requirements of a specific job defined by a specific company.

Personality Variables are those relatively stable qualities that describe how a person relates with others. A strong preference for working with people or a strong preference for order and predictability are examples of behaviors.

Talent Variables describe a person's natural or hard-wired abilities. Talents make it easy for some people to think through a complicated problem logically or to come up with a quick and immediate solution to a problem.

The Berke Assessment measures the following **personality** variables:

Assertiveness: A natural tendency to take initiative in order to control or influence a situation versus being careful in assessing situations before moving into action.
Emotional Intensity: A natural tendency to react strongly, immediately and intensely, especially when events do not unfold as planned versus a tendency to keep frustration to oneself.
Optimism: A natural tendency to think positively about the future versus taking a more skeptical view.
Responsiveness: A natural tendency to react spontaneously and to express oneself outwardly versus being deliberate and patient.
Sociability: A natural tendency to gain satisfaction from interacting with other people versus working with things and ideas.

Social Adaptability: A natural tendency to adapt to other people's feelings to avoid unpleasant consequences versus being less concerned about the impact of one's behavior on others.

Structure: A natural tendency to seek order, certainty and correctness versus working without an established framework.

The Berke Assessment measures the following **talent** variables:

Generalist: The ability to identify with the goals of a group and to connect intuitively with the ideas of others.

Idea Productivity: The ability to produce ideas rapidly one after another.

Logical Problem Solving: The ability to think through large, complicated problems in a methodical, step-by-step manner.

Rapid-Fire Problem Solving: The ability to intuitively and quickly solve many problems, one after another.

The Berke Assessment evaluates an individual's leadership and persuasion styles:

Leadership Style: A combination of personality traits and talents that makes it easy to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of an organization.

Persuasion Style: A combination of personality traits and talents that makes it easy to guide people toward the adoption of an idea, attitude, or action that is mutually beneficial.

For More Information

To receive a copy of The Berke Group's detailed findings regarding the talents and personality traits separating top and bottom performers in critical home-building roles such as New Home Sales Consultant, Construction Superintendent and Customer Service Representative, or to get more information about a future study, contact The Berke Group at 888-220-7611 or e-mail us at info@berkegroup.com.

To learn more about the Berke Assessment or The Berke Group, visit our website at www.berkegroup.com.

The Berke Group

The Berke Group is an assessment and management consulting company specializing in employee selection, management and retention. We are creators of the Berke Assessment, an online assessment tool measuring candidates' natural talents, behaviors and personality traits against job requirements and company culture. We also offer one of the only fully integrated people management and leadership systems available in the market today. Our 30+ years of success in helping our clients recruit, hire, train, motivate, manage and retain "the best" is testimony to the effectiveness of our tools and services, as are the referrals from our clients.

1) Mission

The Berke Group helps its clients select, develop and retain the right people. As creator of the Berke Assessment, we are committed to providing products and services to help our clients maximize the value of their most important asset – their people.

2) Service Offerings

The Berke Group was founded on the principle that people make the difference. We are constantly building on that principle by improving and expanding our easy-to-use, high quality solutions to help our clients select the right people for the right job and to keep them motivated and highly productive for years to come. The Berke Group currently has three primary lines of business:

- **The Berke Assessment:** The Berke Assessment is an online assessment tool designed to assist managers with employee selection and development. It measures key personality traits and natural talents that can have a dramatic impact on job performance, and it allows managers to measure *specific* candidates against *specific* jobs.
- **Organizational Consulting:** The Berke Group provides consulting services to increase its clients' organizational effectiveness through the implementation of integrated recruiting and hiring practices, robust employee training programs, and valuable management, motivational and leadership techniques. Upon completion of an initial evaluation detailing an organization's strengths and weaknesses, our consultants provide the training and hands-on implementation work necessary to ensure our clients are effectively hiring, developing and managing their people.
- **Sales Consulting:** The Berke Group provides consulting services to increase its clients' sales effectiveness by providing the systems, knowledge and skills necessary to maximize sales success in a competitive and changing environment. Following an initial sales organization assessment, our consultants tailor our sales learning program to account for our clients' cultural strengths and organizational nuances. All learning is reinforced by our structured follow-up program designed to ensure 100% sales organization adoption and to guarantee high volume sales.

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