

Executive Summary

Facet5 has been used to identify those Customer Service Staff who are more likely to succeed in the role. When asked to differentiate between lower and higher performers in a large Call Centre the research identified that more effective staff tend to be:

- o more team oriented
- o more sociable,
- o more supportive,
- o more self disciplined and
- o more work oriented.

These behaviours were combined to produce a "*Customer Service Index*". People at the top end of this index were four times more likely to perform well than people at the lower end of the scale.

Audition, Facet5's guide to behavioural interviewing, takes any given profile and, by applying the "*Customer Service Index*" is able to identify which areas to probe at interview and what questions to ask. Audition based interviews can be conducted face-to-face or the output can underpin a telephone interview.

Introduction

Many call centres report difficulty in retaining staff. Annualised turnover figures of 30-40% are common and in many cases the rate is much higher. The costs associated with this high rate of turnover can be huge and have a direct impact on company profitability. Research around the world has suggested that, at minimum, the cost of replacing a staff and bringing them up to full productivity is at least equal to an annual salary. So for a large call centre with 1000 staff, a 30% per annum "churn" would cost the same as 300 people's annual salary bill. If this was \$25000 then a company can be losing \$7.5M per annum! There is also an indirect affect on productivity due to reduced morale and the continual replacement of staff with less experienced people.

A great deal of effort has gone into improving working conditions. Many call/contact centres use the best of modern management practice to make the environment exciting and interesting. But the problem remains.

It has been suggested that some people are "naturally" better suited to working in the call/contact centre environment. If this is the case then it is likely that it will relate to the possession of certain "personal characteristics" or "ways of behaving" which makes them different from the people who leave or in other ways fail to perform.

It is the objective of this study to look at staff in a major call centre and to see whether we can identify sets of characteristics that will typify "effective" Customer Service Staff and that will differentiate them from "less effective" staff.

Process

Sample

The staff of a major call centre was selected for this study. The role was predominantly a "service" centre responding to customer demands for advice and information. Within the centre a group of people were identified as being "effective" performers. The structure of the sample is shown in the table below:

	Performance		
	Other	Effective	Total
Number of Staff	63	30	93

This group represented a sub-sample of the total group surveyed since a few needed to be removed from the analysis for technical reasons (see later).

Data Capture

Each of the people in the study completed a paper and pencil version of Facet5. These questionnaires were completed under controlled conditions at the company's premises. The raw data was then sent to Redfield for analysis. Along with the raw data was a list identifying those people who were seen as "most effective" performers.

Analysis

The analysis was done in a number of stages as follows:

Data preparation: The questionnaires were entered onto the Facet5 web-based system for processing. The raw data was then downloaded in comma delimited (.csv) format and loaded into an SPSS database for analysis.

Data cleaning: The records were all checked for central tendency using statistics produced by Facet5. Records that exceeded the maximum score for central tendency (too many threes in the answers) were filtered from the sample. This is because it is known that too much central tendency may flatten a profile and mask differences that might be there. It was not possible to check for Response Latency (time taken to respond) since the scores were not captured in real time. They were from paper questionnaires. As a result of this cleaning 9 cases were removed from the sample leaving the final sample base as shown above.

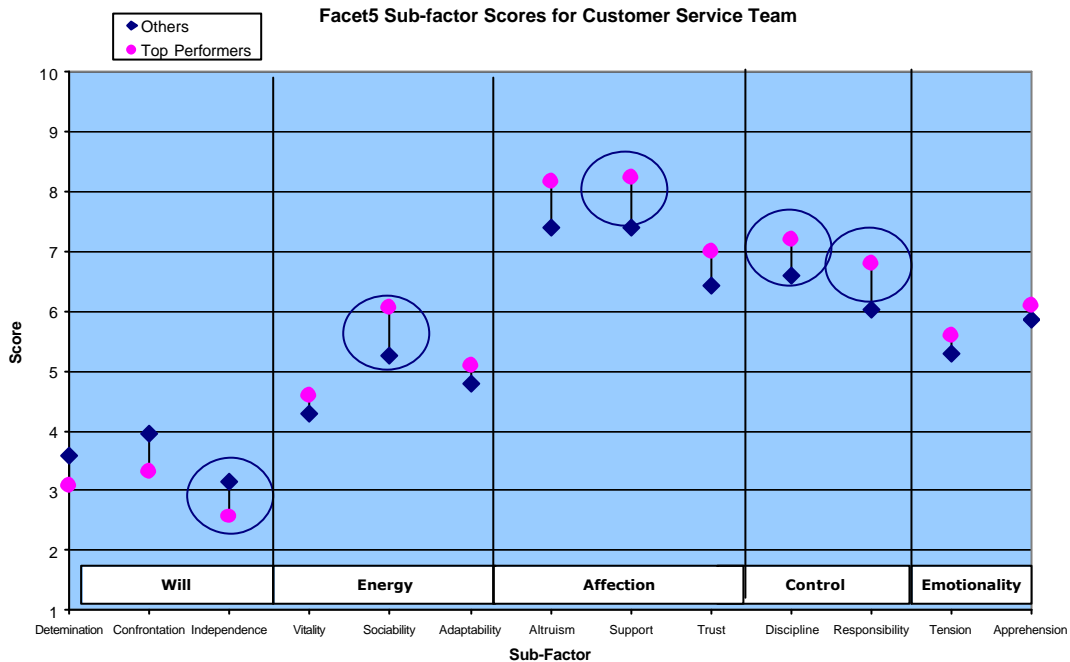
Data Analysis: We conducted a range of statistical tests to identify those Facet5 domains where there was a significant difference between the "top" performing group and the others in the same centre.

Results

“Effective” performers in the Customer Service Centre were primarily higher in Control although they were also more caring and people oriented. When looked at in detail five sub-factors showed through as differentiating. Effective performers were less independent (more team oriented), more sociable, more supportive, more self disciplined and work oriented. These differences can also be seen on the line chart below for the sub-factors. The factors in the circles are the significant ones that can be used to predict performance.

Sub-factor differences

The factors in the circles are the significant ones that can be used to predict performance. The round (pink) markers are the scores for the top performers whereas the diamond (blue) markers are the scores for the others. The circles indicate significant differences.



It can be seen from this that both Control sub-factors are linked to performance and one each from Will, Energy and Affection.

Predicting from the data

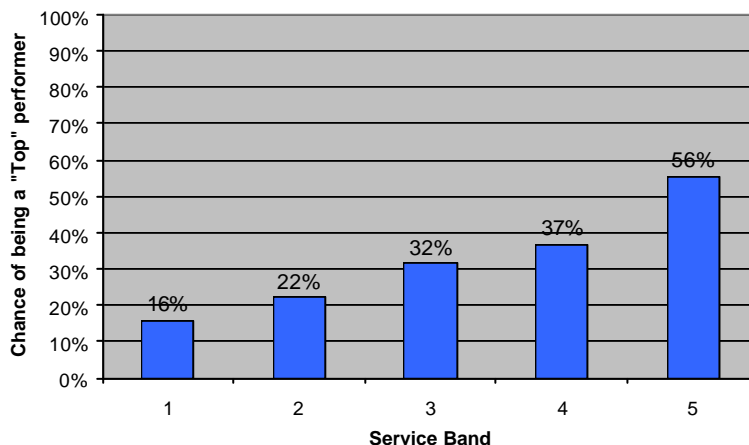
In order to use this information we need an algorithm that takes into account the overall pattern of a person's scores. We need to factor in both the degree to which they differ from other high performers and the direction of this difference. At this point we have no evidence to suggest that there is a non-linear relationship (e.g. more Will is better but there is a point at which it becomes counter-productive). While such a situation is entirely logical we would probably need to extend the study to examine this at a later stage.

This research pointed to a pattern of Facet5 scores that could be associated with "effective" performance. It was clear that the further away from this "ideal" profile, the less likely it was that the person would be "effective". We therefore created a formula that measured how far a person was from this "ideal". Such a "distance" measure yields a score for each person – the lower the score, the closer to the "ideal" and therefore the more likely it is that the person will fall in to the "effective" group. The higher the score the further away from the "ideal" profile and therefore the less likely. For convenience we have re-coded the scores to fall into 5 bands corresponding to each 20% of the sample of people in the study. These are referred to as Service Bands. The lower the Band, the less likely it is that the person will be "effective". We then looked at the proportion of "effective" performers in each band. This table is shown below:

Customer Service Team

Service Band	N in band	N effective performers	Proportion of effective performers
1	19	3	16%
2	18	4	22%
3	19	6	32%
4	19	7	37%
5	18	10	56%
Total in sample	93	30	32%

People in the top band (Service Band 5) are nearly 4 times more likely to perform well than people in the lowest band (Service Band 1). In graphical form the results are as follows:



How useful is this? - Utility Analysis

To determine the significance of this we need to look at the success rates at different ends of the scale and compare them to what is happening now. If this scoring approach was used during recruitment, it could add to the power of the selection process significantly. At present the success rate is 32% (30 out of 93). If Facet5 was applied at the beginning of the selection process and people who scored below Service Band 4 were excluded, we would expect the success rate to improve to 46% (average of 37% and 56%), an improvement of 70%. At the same time we could reduce the number of people interviewed by 60% with a concomitant reduction in resources (and expense) required.

Facet5 Audition Report

The prediction equation described above is useful in providing an indication of likely success in either a Sales or Service role. However Facet5 can do more by providing interview guides based on this research. The Facet5 Audition Report offers recruiters a three-part guide as follows:

1. A chart showing the candidate's Facet5 profile and where it deviates from the "ideal".
2. A chart showing where the significant sub-factors differ and the implications of this.
3. A set of interview guides with specific interview questions. This will provide clear indications of what areas should be probed. While we can create a set of behavioural or situational questions these can be refined and contextualised by a company in order to capture the corporate culture and style.

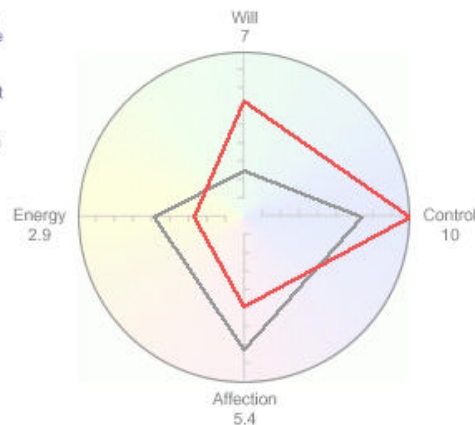
Examples of each of these are shown on the following pages.

Part 1 – Facet5 profile (red line) overlaid on Ideal Profile (grey line)

Audition

This guide provides a structure for an interview for a Customer Service role within Demonstration Client. It is based on research carried out within Demonstration Client and should not be used for other purposes.

(The ideal profile for this role is shown in grey)



This provides a very quick visual guide as to where the candidate matches or does not match the "Ideal". It is clear that in Facet5 terms she is much more assertive, independent and reserved than we are looking for. We can see more detail in the next part of Audition – the Convergence chart.

Part 2 – Convergence between candidate and Ideal significant sub-factors.

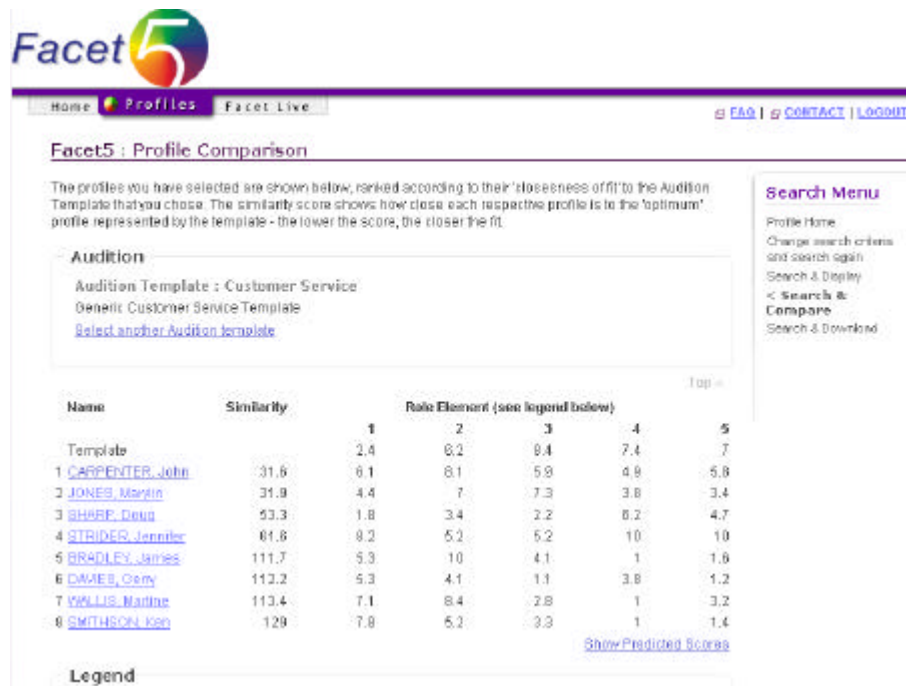
Convergence Chart



The centre line is "ideal" and the chart shows how far the candidate is above or below this reference score. There is also a label that outlines the impact of any such deviation. The area down the centre of the chart is "greyed out" (shown paler here) indicating that small deviations within this band are not significant. We can see that she is much less co-operative than ideal while at the same time much tougher. While we want hard workers, she is very demanding. Has it gone too far? To satisfy ourselves on these points we need to ask the question. Again Facet5 provides guidance.

Comparing Candidates using Audition

Where there are many candidates for the same role Audition allows you to rank them according to their "closeness of fit".



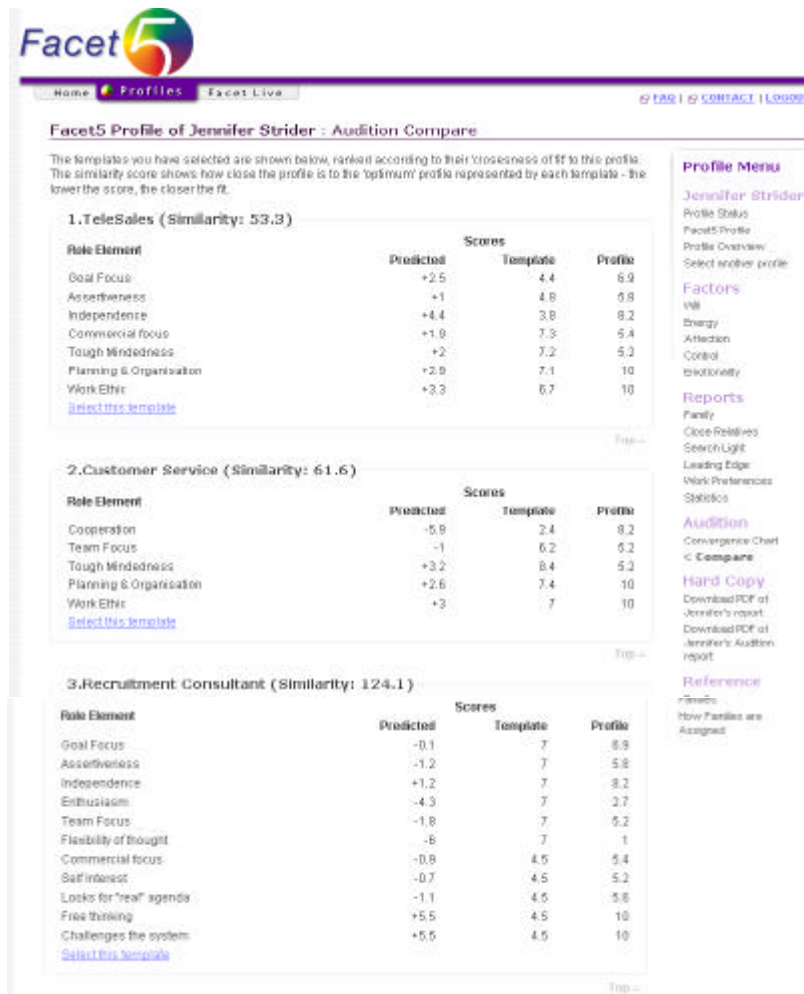
The screenshot shows the 'Facet5 : Profile Comparison' page. It includes a search menu on the right and a table of candidates ranked by similarity to an audition template. The table has columns for Name, Similarity, and Rate Element (1-5).

Name	Similarity	Rate Element (see legend below)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Template		2.4	0.2	0.4	7.4	7
1 CARPENTER, John	31.6	0.1	0.1	5.0	4.9	5.8
2 JONES, Martin	31.9	4.4	7	7.3	3.8	3.4
3 SHARP, Doug	53.3	1.8	3.4	2.2	0.2	4.7
4 STRIDER, Jennifer	61.6	0.2	5.2	5.2	10	10
5 BRADLEY, James	111.7	5.3	10	4.1	1	1.6
6 WALLIS, Cathy	112.2	5.3	4.1	1.1	3.8	1.2
7 WALLIS, Martine	113.4	7.1	8.4	2.8	1	3.2
8 SMITHSON, Ken	129	7.8	5.2	3.3	1	1.4

Here you can see that John Carpenter is a much closer fit than, for example, James Bradley, Martine Wallis and Ken Smithson. The "Similarity" statistic shows just how close each person is to the "Ideal". Clicking on a name brings up the detail showing exactly how the candidate fits the "Ideal".

Finding the best role for a candidate

Audition can also work in reverse. If you have a number of different Roles that are available, you can fit a Candidate to each of them and show which is the best fit. Here is Jennifer assessed for three possible roles: Telesales, Customer Service and Recruitment Consultant. While there may be questions to ask concerning her suitability for a Telesales or Customer Service Role, there are even bigger questions if she wants to be a Recruitment Consultant!



Facet5 Profile of Jennifer Strider - Audition Compare

The templates you have selected are shown below, ranked according to their 'closeness' of fit to this profile. The similarity score shows how close the profile is to the 'optimum' profile represented by each template - the lower the score, the closer the fit.

1. TeleSales (Similarity: 53.3)

Role Element	Scores		
	Predicted	Template	Profile
Goal Focus	+2.5	4.4	6.9
Assertiveness	+1	4.8	6.8
Independence	+4.4	3.8	8.2
Commercial focus	+1.8	7.3	5.4
Tough Mindedness	+2	7.2	5.3
Planning & Organisation	+2.8	7.1	10
Work Ethic	+3.3	6.7	10

[Select this template](#)

2. Customer Service (Similarity: 61.6)

Role Element	Scores		
	Predicted	Template	Profile
Cooperation	-5.8	2.4	8.2
Team Focus	-1	6.2	5.2
Tough Mindedness	+3.2	8.4	5.3
Planning & Organisation	+2.6	7.4	10
Work Ethic	+3	7	10

[Select this template](#)

3. Recruitment Consultant (Similarity: 124.1)

Role Element	Scores		
	Predicted	Template	Profile
Goal Focus	-0.1	7	6.9
Assertiveness	-1.2	7	5.8
Independence	+1.2	7	8.2
Enthusiasm	-4.3	7	3.7
Team Focus	-1.8	7	5.2
Flexibility of thought	-6	7	1
Commercial focus	-0.8	4.5	5.4
Self Interest	-0.7	4.5	5.2
Looks for "real" agendas	-1.1	4.5	5.8
Free thinking	+5.5	4.5	10
Challenges the system	+5.5	4.5	10

[Select this template](#)

Profile Menu

- Jennifer Strider
- Profile Status
- Facet5 Profile
- Profile Overview
- Select another profile

Factors

- VMI
- Energy
- Attention
- Control
- Isotropy

Reports

- Family
- Close Relatives
- Search Light
- Leading Edge
- Work Preferences
- Statistics

Audition

- Convergence Chart
- Compare

Hard Copy

- Download PDF of Jennifer's report
- Download PDF of Jennifer's Audition report

Reference

- Times
- How Families are Assigned

Clicking on any role will show the detail.



Summary

This study has shown that Facet5 profiles are related to success in Customer Service. If Facet5 was used consistently as an aid to the selection process, overall performance (as defined here) could be improved significantly. The proportion of successful Customer Service staff should improve from 32% to nearly 60% - i.e. it could nearly double.

When a candidate's Facet5 profile is used to guide an interview, interviewers will have clear guidelines to a standardised interview process as well as prompts for what to look for for each candidate based on the "fit" between their Facet5 profile and the role they are going for.