

Telesales Representative

FF03 Sales and account management · ISCO-08 5244 · CBS 0334 Outbound call center agents and other sales representatives · seniority junior · Also known as: Contact Centre Sales Agent, Telemarketer

Sells products or services by telephone to consumers or small businesses, works to call guidelines and daily volumes, and records every call outcome.

The telesales representative works in a calling team with daily volume goals and a fixed conversation structure, usually under a supervisor. Unlike an inside sales representative, the work involves short conversations and one off transactions rather than an own portfolio. Selection mainly measures verbal fluency, while persisting after dozens of rejections a day and following call requirements precisely are the real reasons for attrition.

Key figures for this profile

24 skills · 10 competencies to measure · 5 knockout skills · centre of gravity: Business operations, commerce and entrepreneurship 38%, Communication and influence 30%, Self-management, drive and resilience 21%

1 Competencies to measure

These are the behavioural and ability constructs in this profile. Each one shows which hrmforce questionnaire measures it.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Perseverance Competency (50-framework): Perseverance Knockout	■■■■■ N5	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)	Personality questionnaire	Keeps multi year programmes on course despite sustained opposition and holds the organisation to the chosen direction after setbacks.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Persuasiveness Competency (50-framework): Persuasiveness Knockout		Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Chooses per counterpart the argument that matches their interest and checks along the way whether the agreement is genuine.
Client focus Competency (50-framework): Customer Focus Knockout		Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	360-degree feedback	Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.
Result orientation Competency (50-framework): Results-Orientation		Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Translates an assignment into measurable interim goals, measures progress and drops activities that do not contribute to the result.
Commercial capability Competency (50-framework): Commercial acumen Knockout		Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Discusses additional services with existing customers on own initiative and records the revenue opportunity in the customer file.
Listening and probing Competency (50-framework): Listen		Big Fifty, 360 Feedback	360-degree feedback	Summarises both the content and the feeling of the other party and probes until the real interest behind the request becomes visible.
Market orientation Competency (50-framework): Market Orientation		Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Links signals from customers and competitors to the own offering and proposes adjustments on that basis.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Emotion regulation Competency (50-framework): Stress resilience		Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Responds to criticism with a question rather than a rebuttal and afterwards discusses it with the supervisor.
Recovery after setbacks Competency (50-framework): Stress resilience		Big Fifty, Mental Resilience (4C), 360 Feedback	Personality questionnaire	Starts again after a rejected result as soon as the supervisor has indicated what needs to change.
Sustaining pace in repetitive work Competency (50-framework): Discipline		Big Fifty, Work sample test	Work sample test	Completes the assigned series of operations at the pace indicated and reports when a backlog arises.

2 Full skill profile

Every skill in this profile, sorted by weight. The behavioural anchor under each skill belongs to the target level.

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Perseverance Keeps multi year programmes on course despite sustained opposition and holds the organisation to the chosen direction after setbacks.	 N5	5	yes	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)
G	Persuasiveness Chooses per counterpart the argument that matches their interest and checks along the way whether the agreement is genuine.	 N3	5	yes	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
G	Client focus Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.	 N3	5	yes	360-degree feedback	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Service calls and telephone contact Settles unusual questions within a single call, keeps call time under control and audibly summarises the agreement made.	 N3	5	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Communication Styles

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Result orientation Translates an assignment into measurable interim goals, measures progress and drops activities that do not contribute to the result.	 N3	5	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
G	Commercial capability Discusses additional services with existing customers on own initiative and records the revenue opportunity in the customer file.	 N3	5	yes	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Consultative selling Uncovers the underlying interests of several counterparts by probing and adjusts the proposal to these during the conversation.	 N3	5	yes	Assessment centre	Competency Check, 360 Feedback, Work sample test
V	Conversation management Chooses a fitting question type for each phase, summarises along the way and steers the conversation back to its goal when it drifts.	 N3	4	no	Assessment centre	Communication Styles, Competency Check
G	Listening and probing Summarises both the content and the feeling of the other party and probes until the real interest behind the request becomes visible.	 N3	4	no	360-degree feedback	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Negotiating Prepares a range and a fallback option beforehand, trades points of unequal weight and closes with written confirmation.	 N3	4	no	Assessment centre	Conflict Styles, Competency Check
V	relationship management Plans contact moments for an own portfolio of relations, discusses satisfaction and starts improvement actions when signals appear.	 N3	4	no	Structured interview	Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Acquisition and lead generation Builds an own prospect list from market and network information and books new first conversations with it every week.	 N3	4	no	Work sample test	Competency Check, Work sample test, 360 Feedback
G	Market orientation Links signals from customers and competitors to the own offering and proposes adjustments on that basis.	 N3	4	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
G	Emotion regulation Responds to criticism with a question rather than a rebuttal and afterwards discusses it with the supervisor.	 N2	4	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, 360 Feedback

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Sales forecasting and pipeline management Updates the status of own sales opportunities in the customer system and reports which opportunities have lapsed.	 N2	4	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Knowledge test (client-specific)
G	Recovery after setbacks Starts again after a rejected result as soon as the supervisor has indicated what needs to change.	 N2	3	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, Mental Resilience (4C), 360 Feedback
V	Contracting and closing Fills in a standard agreement with the agreed details and checks whether all annexes are present.	 N2	3	no	Work sample test	Competency Check, Work sample test
V	Managing customer value and retention Signals customers who buy less than usual and reports this to the responsible colleague.	 N2	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Knowledge test (client-specific)
K	Complying with privacy and data protection Shares personal data only through the approved systems and reports a suspected data breach immediately to the contact person.	 N2	3	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Sustaining pace in repetitive work Completes the assigned series of operations at the pace indicated and reports when a backlog arises.	 N2	3	no	Work sample test	Big Fifty, Work sample test
V	Time management and prioritising Follows a task list provided by others and asks which task takes priority whenever new requests arrive.	 N2	2	no	Work sample test	Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Price negotiation Follows the established price list and discount rules and refers deviating customer requests to the manager.	 N2	2	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Reporting and dashboard building Fills an existing dashboard or report template with current figures and checks the display for errors.	 N1	2	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Portfolio
V	Account management Keeps customer contact details and agreements up to date in the system and reminds the account manager of open actions.	 N1	1	no	Structured interview	Competency Check, 360 Feedback

3 Levels per seniority

The same profile with the job family seniority adjustment applied. Target levels are clamped to 1 to 5.

Skill	junior	medior
Perseverance	N5	N5
Persuasiveness	N3	N4
Client focus	N3	N4
Service calls and telephone contact	N3	N4
Result orientation	N3	N4
Commercial capability	N3	N4
Consultative selling	N3	N4
Conversation management	N3	N4
Listening and probing	N3	N4
Negotiating	N3	N4
relationship management	N3	N4
Acquisition and lead generation	N3	N4
Market orientation	N3	N4
Emotion regulation	N2	N3
Sales forecasting and pipeline management	N2	N3
Recovery after setbacks	N2	N3
Contracting and closing	N2	N3
Managing customer value and retention	N2	N3
Complying with privacy and data protection	N2	N3
Sustaining pace in repetitive work	N2	N3
Time management and prioritising	N2	N3
Price negotiation	N2	N2
Reporting and dashboard building	N1	N2

Skill	junior	medior
Account management	N1	N1

4 The proficiency scale

Level	Label	Autonomy	Complexity	Scope	Depth of knowledge
N1	Guided	works under supervision and follows instruction	routine, one variable at a time	own task	basic understanding of terminology
N2	Applying	works independently within set frameworks	familiar situations with limited variation	own role	working knowledge, applies standard approach
N3	Proficient	sets own approach and seeks input proactively	several variables, some ambiguity	own team or process	thorough knowledge, weighs alternatives
N4	Advanced	directs others and decides on the approach	complex, with conflicting interests	several teams or a department	in-depth knowledge, advises others
N5	Leading	sets the standard and the policy	strategic, under high uncertainty	organisation, value chain or profession	authority, advances the profession

5 Behavioural anchors per skill

Anchors sit at N1, N3 and N5. N2 and N4 are deliberately not anchored: raters interpolate between them, following the O*NET convention.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Perseverance Keeps working towards a goal when the work brings resistance, repetition or disappointing interim results, and looks for another route to the same goal.	Picks up a task again after a failed attempt once the supervisor shows how it can be done differently.	Keeps seeking alternative routes on a stalled case and involves others in that search on own initiative.	Keeps multi year programmes on course despite sustained opposition and holds the organisation to the chosen direction after setbacks.
Persuasiveness Moving others towards a position, decision or behaviour they initially resisted, using substantive arguments, examples and personal presence.	Puts forward an own proposal in a meeting and supports it with one concrete example from practice.	Chooses per counterpart the argument that matches their interest and checks along the way whether the agreement is genuine.	Wins board and external parties over to a far reaching change of course and sustains that support when resistance increases.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Client focus Acting from the question and interest of the client, keeping agreements and visibly directing own work towards usefulness for that client.	Responds to client questions within the agreed term and refers on when the answer falls outside own task.	Uncovers the real need behind a client question, makes a fitting proposal and checks after delivery whether it works.	Translates client signals into changes in services and policy and holds the organisation accountable for the promised client experience.
Service calls and telephone contact Handling client contacts by telephone and chat with a fixed structure, controlled questioning and a closing that contains a concrete agreement.	Answers according to the script, registers the question in the system and transfers the caller to the right colleague.	Settles unusual questions within a single call, keeps call time under control and audibly summarises the agreement made.	Designs conversation models and quality standards for the contact centre and reviews recordings to support coaching and system choices.
Result orientation Directs own action at agreed results, keeps progress towards those results in view and chooses activities that bring the goal closer.	Finishes the assigned task within the stated norm and reports to the supervisor what has been achieved.	Translates an assignment into measurable interim goals, measures progress and drops activities that do not contribute to the result.	Sets the result agreements and performance measures for the organisation and upholds them when interests in play are conflicting.
Commercial capability Recognises opportunities for revenue and margin in contacts with customers and the market, and acts on them with offers and agreements.	Reports to the account manager which customer wish could lead to an additional assignment.	Discusses additional services with existing customers on own initiative and records the revenue opportunity in the customer file.	Sets the commercial course for the organisation, chooses which markets are served and accounts for those choices to the board.
Consultative selling Explores the question behind a customer question, links it to a fitting solution and substantiates the proposal with customer benefit.	Asks the prepared open questions in a sales conversation and summarises the customer need out loud.	Uncovers the underlying interests of several counterparts by probing and adjusts the proposal to these during the conversation.	Guides complex sales processes with several decision makers, designs the conversation method and trains colleagues in applying it.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Conversation management Opening, steering and closing a conversation purposefully by asking questions, summarising and making concrete agreements about what happens next.	Follows a prepared list of questions, asks them in the given order and records the agreements that were made.	Chooses a fitting question type for each phase, summarises along the way and steers the conversation back to its goal when it drifts.	Leads conversations with opposing interests at board level, develops conversation models for the organisation and tests them against practice.
Listening and probing Taking in the message of the other party fully, checking whether it is understood correctly and using targeted questions to surface underlying interests and assumptions.	Lets the other person finish speaking, takes notes and afterwards asks about anything that stayed unclear.	Summarises both the content and the feeling of the other party and probes until the real interest behind the request becomes visible.	Picks up sensitive signals in conversations with directors and supervisors and uses them to adjust organisational policy in good time.
Negotiating Reaching an agreement with one or more parties by exploring interests, using trade offs and consciously holding agreed limits.	Negotiates delivery time or price within fixed margins and refers any deviation to the manager.	Prepares a range and a fallback option beforehand, trades points of unequal weight and closes with written confirmation.	Leads negotiations on multi year contracts or employment terms, sets the mandate and defines the negotiating line for the organisation.
relationship management Maintaining existing relationships with clients, colleagues or partners by planning contact moments, keeping agreements and picking up signals in good time.	Keeps contact details and agreements with relations up to date and responds to questions within the agreed time.	Plans contact moments for an own portfolio of relations, discusses satisfaction and starts improvement actions when signals appear.	Decides how the organisation maintains strategic relations, assigns ownership and assesses the value of the relationship portfolio.
Acquisition and lead generation Finds and approaches new customers through network, telephone, email and online channels, and turns interest into a concrete conversation.	Calls a supplied list of prospects following a fixed conversation outline and records the outcome for each contact.	Builds an own prospect list from market and network information and books new first conversations with it every week.	Develops the acquisition approach for the whole organisation, chooses channels and messages and tests these against achieved conversion.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Market orientation Follows what happens in the market, with customers and with competitors and includes that information in own choices and proposals.	Reads the customer newsletter and the sector news and raises striking signals during the team meeting.	Links signals from customers and competitors to the own offering and proposes adjustments on that basis.	Translates market developments into the strategic agenda of the organisation and repositions the offering for the longer term.
Emotion regulation Keeps own reaction in check at work when facing irritation, criticism or disappointment, and chooses deliberately how and when to respond.	Responds to criticism with a question rather than a rebuttal and afterwards discusses it with the supervisor.	Names own reaction in an escalating conversation, keeps the tone businesslike and brings the discussion back to the substance.	Stays calm in heavily charged meetings and models across the organisation how criticism is handled under tension.
Sales forecasting and pipeline management Records ongoing sales opportunities by stage, estimates probability and revenue and translates this into a forecast for the coming period.	Updates the status of own sales opportunities in the customer system and reports which opportunities have lapsed.	Substantiates the own monthly forecast with opportunity stages and historical conversion and explains deviations from the previous forecast.	Sets up the forecasting method for the whole sales organisation and uses the outcomes for capacity and investment decisions.
Recovery after setbacks Resumes work shortly after a rejection, mistake or failed project, names what the setback teaches and adjusts the approach accordingly.	Starts again after a rejected result as soon as the supervisor has indicated what needs to change.	Analyses after a failed effort what went wrong, discusses it with those involved and starts a revised approach within a week.	Gets the organisation moving again after a major loss and organises that lessons from failures are structurally acted upon.
Contracting and closing Converts a verbal agreement into a valid offer and contract, clears remaining objections and gets the customer to sign.	Fills in a standard agreement with the agreed details and checks whether all annexes are present.	Recognises buying signals, names the remaining objection and puts a signable proposal on the table within own authority.	Designs the contract forms and mandates for the organisation and decides on exceptions in deals with major financial impact.
Managing customer value and retention Measures revenue, margin and churn per customer group and deploys actions to retain valuable customers and let them grow.	Signals customers who buy less than usual and reports this to the responsible colleague.	Analyses churn and customer value in the own portfolio and carries out targeted retention actions with measurable results.	Determines the retention policy of the organisation, sets standards for customer value and decides on investments in retention.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Complying with privacy and data protection Processes personal data according to the applicable privacy rules, knows the legal bases and acts on requests and data breaches by procedure.	Shares personal data only through the approved systems and reports a suspected data breach immediately to the contact person.	Tests a new working method against the privacy rules, names the legal basis and records the processing in the register.	Sets the privacy policy of the organisation, decides on processing agreements and is the contact point for the supervisory authority.
Sustaining pace in repetitive work Maintains a constant pace and constant quality in recurring operations throughout the shift and spreads the effort over the available time.	Completes the assigned series of operations at the pace indicated and reports when a backlog arises.	Sustains the pace for a full shift, builds in own rhythm and short recovery moments and stays within the quality standard.	Sets attainable pace standards for the team and organises the work so that quality is retained at high output.
Time management and prioritising Allocates available time across tasks by urgency and importance, sets a sequence and adjusts it when new work arrives during the period.	Follows a task list provided by others and asks which task takes priority whenever new requests arrive.	Ranks own work by urgency and importance, builds in buffer time and explains to others why an item will arrive later.	Sets prioritisation agreements and planning standards across the organisation and decides which work streams receive time and capacity when both are scarce.
Price negotiation Sets room and limits on price and conditions in advance, exchanges concessions during the conversation and closes within the own margin.	Follows the established price list and discount rules and refers deviating customer requests to the manager.	Prepares a range and trading items for each negotiation and holds on to the agreed lower limit under pressure.	Sets the pricing and discount policy of the organisation and personally negotiates the framework contracts with the largest parties.
Reporting and dashboard building Builds recurring reports and dashboards that show the right indicators for an agreed audience and keeps their definitions up to date.	Fills an existing dashboard or report template with current figures and checks the display for errors.	Designs a dashboard together with the user, chooses indicators and definitions and processes user feedback into new versions.	Determines which management information the organisation uses and keeps definitions unambiguous across all reporting.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Account management Maintains the relationship with assigned customers, plans contact moments, follows up agreements and ensures the customer interest lands inside the organisation.	Keeps customer contact details and agreements up to date in the system and reminds the account manager of open actions.	Independently carries out an account plan for an own customer portfolio and discusses results and plans with the customer yearly.	Determines the approach for strategic customers of the organisation and sits at board level to discuss multi year cooperation.

6 Assessment methods and validity

The validities are the corrected meta-analytic estimates from Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens (2022) in the Journal of Applied Psychology, which replace the older Schmidt and Hunter (1998) figures. The spread matters as much as the mean: with a high SD, validity varies strongly by context.

Assessment method	rho	SD	What it is
Personality questionnaire	0.40	0.15	Self-report of behavioural preferences. At hrnforce the Big Fifty and the 15PF.
Assessment centre	0.29	0.09	Multiple exercises, multiple assessors, dimension-wise scoring.
360-degree feedback	-	-	Multiple raters around the person rate behaviour against behavioural anchors.
Work sample test	0.33	0.09	The candidate performs a representative work sample under standardised conditions.
Structured interview	0.42	0.19	Behaviour-based interview with fixed questions and a rating scale per question.
Knowledge test	0.40	0.13	Test of declarative job knowledge, usually assembled per client.

7 Assessment instruments for this job

hrnforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Competency Check	14	Behavioral-Level Competency Assessment
360 Feedback	14	Multiple assessments based on behavioral anchors
Big Fifty	11	Personality questionnaire, 150 items, 25 factors
Work sample test	8	Representative work sample under standardized conditions
Knowledge test (client-specific)	3	Professional knowledge test, customized for each client
15PF	2	Personality Profile, a shorter alternative to the Big Fifty
Mental Resilience (4C)	2	Mental Resilience According to the 4C Model
Communication Styles	2	Preferred communication style
Conflict Styles	1	Preferred style in conflict situations

hrmforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Portfolio	1	Evaluation of prior work against fixed criteria

8 How to use this profile

1. Agree the profile with the hiring manager before the first candidate is measured. Weights shifted afterwards make the outcome indefensible.
2. Choose the assessment method per skill from the Assessment method column. Combine at most three methods per candidate.
3. Calibrate the assessors in a two-hour session using the anchors in chapter 5. Anchors without rater training deliver little.
4. Fill in the match calculator and discuss the gaps in the development conversation. Type A and type G are selection criteria, not one-quarter development goals.

Source: hrmforce Skills Framework 2.0, version 2.0.0, built 2026-09-08. Crosswalks to ESCO v1.2.1, O*NET 31.0, Lightcast Open Skills, SFIA 9, DigComp 3.0, EntreComp, LifeComp, GreenComp, AILit, WEF Future of Jobs 2025, ISCO-08 and the Dutch CBS occupational classification BRC 2014 edition 2025. This profile is a starting point, not a standard: align it with your own organisation before selecting on it.