

# Recruit High Performers Drive the Business!

*With the SASQ Selection Tool*



Are you losing money on new hires who fall short of your expectations?

Do those who appear to have the most potential, turn out to be less than successful?

How confident are you in identifying the right person for your team?



*With the SASQ, you can identify the people who have the resilience essential for challenging positions before you make a large investment in training and support.*



Research is clear that the *ability to overcome adversity is critical to success*. However, a resume or interview provides little if any information about an individual's resilience in the face of setback. *There is now an extremely reliable tool to measure just that!*

The **Seligman Attributional Style Questionnaire (SASQ)** determines how well a person responds to adversity and pressure. It is a powerful selection tool designed to measure *optimism, persistence* and *resilience* in prospective and current staff members. This questionnaire will assist you in identifying the top producers essential to the growth and success of your company. It is a proven process to increase productivity, reduce employee turnover, identify top producers and create a more optimistic and resilient work force.

Rigorous scientific research conducted over 30 years by Dr. Martin Seligman, a leading expert in motivational psychology, has verified that a high level of **optimism** is a vital component to predicting high achievers. This forms the basis for the **SASQ Selection Tool**. A look at the statistics gathered from a wide range of industries will verify that the **SASQ** is an extremely effective process.

***"In the first two years on the job, salesmen who scored high for optimism sold 37% more insurance than their more pessimistic brethren."***

***Fortune***

The attribute that sets high achievers apart from the average person is their level of **optimism**.

Seligman's research shows the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. He determined that people have a consistent way of interpreting the good and bad events in their lives. The way a person explains these events, Seligman says, can predict and determine his or her future. Those who believe they are masters of their own fate are more likely to succeed than those who attribute events to forces beyond their control.

Due to Seligman's work, it is now possible to quantify whether an individual is an optimist or a pessimist. Seligman calls this kind of attribution "explanatory style." The test, the **Seligman Attributional Style Questionnaire (SASQ)**, reveals whether or not a person will become defeated by a setback and give up, or if they will overcome it and keep fighting. It does so by dissecting a person's explanatory style from three directions to reveal how he/she views events.

The **SASQ Selection Tool** is an extremely effective process in determining who will succeed. Research, validated by more than **500 studies at over 100 universities** around the world, has proven the importance of the ability to overcome adversity. The test, administered to over 400,000 prospective and current employees from over 75 companies in many different industries, confirms the benefits of optimistic employees.

Industry	Results of Research
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic sales agents outsell pessimistic agents by 37%</li> <li>• Extremely optimistic sales agents outsell the extreme pessimistic agents by 88%</li> <li>• Pessimistic agents are twice as likely as optimists to quit their jobs</li> <li>• Extremely pessimistic agents are three times more likely to quit than extreme optimists</li> </ul>
Call Center/Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top performing representatives were found to be 50% more optimistic than below average performers.</li> </ul>
Automotive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic sales agents outsell pessimistic agents by 20%</li> <li>• Optimistic managers outsell the pessimistic managers by 27%</li> </ul>
Telecommunications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic sales agents outsell pessimistic agents by 29%</li> <li>• Extremely optimistic sales agents outsell the extreme pessimistic agents by 39%</li> </ul>
Office Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic sales agents outsell pessimistic agents by 19%</li> </ul>
Banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top performing salespeople were found to be 25% more optimistic than below average performers</li> </ul>
Real Estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic sales agents outsell pessimistic agents by 33%</li> </ul>

# The Power of Explanatory Style

By Jill Neimark

(Reprinted from Success Magazine)

**"How people respond to setbacks - optimistically or pessimistically - is a fairly accurate indicator of how well they will succeed in school, in sports and in certain kinds of work. People with an optimistic view of life tend to treat obstacles and setbacks as temporary and therefore surmountable. Pessimists take them personally; what others see as fleeting localized impediments, they view as pervasive and permanent."**

**Time**

Robert Dell should have been crushed. Two years ago, the meat-packing plant where he worked closed on a half hour's notice. "Severance?" asks the blond, 47-year-old Dell, who is married with two children. "I got what was in my wallet." Within weeks he had traded in his butcher's apron for a business suit. He then applied for a sales position at Metropolitan Life. "It never occurred to me that I didn't know how to sell," explains Dell, who last year joined other top sellers in the Leader's Club at Met Life.

By most standards, Dell was an average Joe. He'd been punching time clocks for 26 years, as his father did before him. He hadn't sold so much as a glass of lemonade when he was a kid, and when he took the standard insurance industry certification test, he barely passed. So how did Met Life recognize the super-salesman in the sausage stuffer? Dell possessed one trait that made up for everything he lacked: *relentless optimism*.

Just before Dell lost his job, Martin Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, had convinced Met Life to launch a highly original pilot program to hire new recruits. Management's best predictor of success, Seligman argued, is the employee's level of optimism. Met Life was intrigued, but wondered whether tests could really recognize and measure optimism.

So Seligman sold them on his 20-minute written exam to identify upbeat people. Met Life used it to test 15,000 recruits – many of whom failed the industry exam the first time around. If these novice salesmen performed, the insurance carrier would agree to expand the program. Within months, the recruits were dramatically *outselling* those hired using the traditional way. Since then, Met Life has commissioned Seligman to sift through 20,000 other applicants to identify the optimists. Seligman estimates this new hiring practice to boost revenues \$10 million.

Seligman's research shows the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. The way a person explains events in his life, Seligman says, can predict and determine his future. Those who believed they are masters of their fate are more likely to succeed than those who attribute events to forces beyond their control. Seligman's tests contain 12 hypothetical and open-ended situations, from the tragic to the mundane, that provide clues to the test taker's personality. For example: "Your mate walks out of the room, slamming the door," says Seligman. "How do you explain that? Very simply, a pessimist might say, 'I'm unlovable,' while an optimist would think it's no big deal, saying something like, 'Everyone gets in bad moods.'" In short, optimists see themselves in control of events, or at least not at the mercy of events. Pessimists feel victimized by events and powerless to do anything about them. Due to Seligman's work, it is now possible to quantify whether an individual is an optimist or a pessimist. Seligman calls this kind of attribution "explanatory style." The test, the Seligman Attributional Style Questionnaire (SASQ), dissects a person's explanatory style from three directions to reveal how he/she views events:

**Stable.** Does a person see events as controllable? Or does he feel life is out of his control? Take two people whose investments in the stock market have just doubled. An optimist would call it a smart move, a success. A pessimist would say it's just a stroke of luck, like winning the lottery. If, on the other hand, a stock suddenly plummets, the optimist would deem it a fluke. To the pessimist, it could not have happened any other way.

**Global.** The optimist feels his windfall is general proof that he's a success in life. He may sometimes even give the event more weight than it truly merits. But to the pessimist, it's just an isolated case of luck. With a bad event, however, the tables turn dramatically. Optimists dismiss each as an isolated occurrence, while for pessimists a bad event casts a dark, depressing shadow over their lives.

**Internal.** Optimists shrug off the bad and internalize the good. Pessimists attribute the good to outside forces and the bad to themselves.

At Met Life, Bob Dell doesn't get deflated by rejection. That allows him to push ahead with new prospects, his enthusiasm unabated. "This week I got a 'no' from a guy I'd been working on for three and a half months," he explains. "But I didn't get depressed about it. The client isn't rejecting me personally." In the next breath, Dell takes full credit for successful sales: "I have a good, substantial client list. I got it through prospecting, and I work very hard to maintain it. These people would never deal with someone they had no faith in. If I sell, it's because they're accepting me."

His answers are absolutely consistent with his performance on the SASQ, though he can barely recall the questionnaire. Dell invariably separated himself from bad events, like rejections, but he instantly internalizes good events as proof of his skills and diligence and how well his life is going.

### **Seligman's broad studies of explanatory style show the remarkable impact optimism has on achievement and well-being:**

**Good Health.** Among 99 Harvard University graduates who were also World War II vets and have had physical examinations every five years since graduation, the men who were optimists at 25 were significantly healthier at 65 than the pessimists.

**Peak Performance.** Seligman analyzed the explanatory styles of members of several professional baseball teams and found that optimists regularly surpassed expectations. That is, optimistic teams built momentum, developing a kind of synergy that helped them beat the point spreads. This makes a good case for **staffing a company** with optimists.

**Persistence.** Pessimists give up, optimists persevere. In contrast to pessimists, Seligman found, even children who are optimists keep trying something until they master it. And these tendencies can last a lifetime. As adults in the work force, **pessimists are twice as likely to quit their jobs as optimists.**

**Risk taking.** Because optimists have unflagging faith in their abilities, they're more likely to take risks.

"It's not reality itself that's the problem," Seligman concludes from his studies. "We all suffer tragic realities, but it's *how you see reality that makes the difference.*" We all interpret events and develop a point of view about life, which in turn colors the way we approach the future. This is why optimists like Robert Dell 'stay with it' and outsell others with a more pessimistic explanatory style. Met Life – along with hundreds of other companies - have benefited, dramatically reducing turnover, improving performance and creating a more resilient workforce since implementing the SASQ. The results speak for themselves.

Managers can use a similar process to nurture an employee's optimism. They can present alternative explanations for bad events. Their feedback can help people understand the cause-and-effect relationship between their efforts and results, good or bad. The message: They are in control of events that shape their lives. Constant reinforcement is important. How often? Anytime a manager talks to a subordinate. The process should become second nature.

However, says Seligman, it's far better for managers to hire optimists for positions with a risk of setback and rejection – which is most jobs in this economy. They tend to perform better. Seligman discovered salespeople, for instance, outsell pessimists by **37 percent** in their first two years – extremely optimistic salespeople outsell extreme pessimists by **88%! ↵**

***"Seligman's research shows the power of self-fulfilling prophecies. Those who believe they are masters of their fate are more likely to succeed than those who attribute events to forces beyond their control."***

**Success**

## High Stakes need High Performers!

Only the SASQ rigorously tests for optimism – and now you can too!

Test takers cannot 'beat the test'. It is impossible to outsmart the questionnaire to improve a score.

Online testing ensures that SASQ is available all over the world, therefore providing easy access to both prospective candidates and existing employees. Results are available immediately.

We believe passionately that this test will save your company money, time and aggravation. Call today to:

- Improve performance in selecting new employees
- Save on hiring and training costs
- Decrease employee turnover
- Evaluate existing employees to improve their ability to deal with setbacks



4115 SHERBROOKE STREET WEST MONTREAL  
QUEBEC CANADA H3Z 1K9  
TEL: 800-361-4908 FAX: 514-989-9934  
[www.waldentesting.com](http://www.waldentesting.com)

## The Power of Optimism

The attribute that sets high achievers apart from the average person is their level of optimism. Optimists see themselves in control of events. They believe that adversity is short-lived and manageable and they can take action to overcome obstacles on the road to success. Optimists are more likely to be self-motivated, resourceful, assertive and decisive in challenging situations. They cope well with frequent frustration and stress.

Optimism is not new – but our understanding of its importance for high performance and our ability to accurately measure it is!

Optimism is a learned attribute, and one that can be shaped and nurtured to pay real dividends in a more resilient workforce. Research shows that optimists enjoy better health, take less time off work, are more adaptable in a changing environment, and perform at higher levels.

*"This test could save companies millions of dollars a year in training costs alone."*

*Psychology Today*