

# CASE STUDY

FROM TURNOVER ABYSS  
TO MULTI-MILLION  
DOLLAR SALES



Human Resources Staffing Industry

Profiles  International  
imagine great people®

# ProfileXT<sup>®</sup>, Profiles Sales Assessment<sup>™</sup>, & CheckPoint360<sup>®</sup>™



## AT A GLANCE

### CHALLENGES:

- 600% Turnover
- Recruit, hire, and retain talent
- Mandate: Turn the bottomless pit upside-down

### SOLUTION:

- Use Profiles' assessments and hire the right person
- Train them
- Hold employees accountable

### RESULTS:

- Reduced turnover to 9%
- Opened 29 additional branches
- Double-digit sales & profit growth for a decade

There was a time that entrepreneur Steve Cardy stared into a turnover abyss of 600 percent at the staffing company he had just joined. As the new operations director, he had a mandate: Turn the bottomless pit upside-down.

“I was in charge and a little bit terrified,” said Cardy, now a Profiles International strategic partner and owner of Synchronized Business Solutions in the Niagara region of Canada. The person who recruited him for the staffing company wanted growth. Cardy wanted the same thing. But first he had to get some training himself as his experience was in hospitality, not staffing. And then he had to find the right people for the job.

With little time to spare, he embarked on a decade-long journey that eventually reduced turnover to nine percent.

Three Profiles assessments that helped him achieve this astonishing success were the ProfileXT<sup>®</sup>, Profiles Sales Assessment<sup>™</sup>, and CheckPoint 360<sup>®</sup>™.

## The Background

Cardy began his professional adventure in 1979 as president and CEO of a catering company. Soon he moved into the restaurant industry. He worked with Mothers Pizza, PepsiCo Food International, and Cara Operations Limited, a Canadian company that provides services to airlines and operates several restaurant chains.

As a high-performing senior manager in the hospitality industry, he attracted attention from an executive in the United States who needed Cardy's skills. “He called me and said, ‘I have this opportunity.’” Cardy turned him down, but the recruiter persisted. Finally, said Cardy, “I took a look.” The recruiter prevailed.

Cardy saw that the opportunity was vast. Corporate leaders of the organization (a staffing firm based in Tacoma, Wash., and traded on the New York Stock Exchange) wanted him to run the Canadian division. It provided blue-collar workers for construction and other jobs, with a promise of providing as many workers as a project required – from one to hundreds – by the next day.

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“Even in this atmosphere, the assessments worked. “They were absolutely seamless,” Cardy said. “And we reduced conflict right out of the gate because we knew how to manage each individual.”

“There were 650,000 workers in the entire company,” Cardy said. “In Canada, there were 25,000 workers.” Customers were seasonal and sometimes required one worker or, on occasion, 500, or any number in between.

But a snag appeared at the branch manager level. There, turnover was 600 percent. Cardy, who became operations director for the firm in 1998, knew he needed to do several things fast.

## The Goal and Results

The recruitment and staffing organization’s leaders wanted Cardy, who oversaw the entire Canadian operations, to do a complete rebuilding of the company, which had 11 branches when he started. “We needed to go coast to coast to make money,” Cardy said. So in short order, he needed to find and retain talent and achieve profitability. Profiles’ assessments, training, and coaching were all critical components.

Cardy did two things simultaneously: He partnered with Profiles International for better selection of employees, and with Dale Carnegie for sales training. While one organization Cardy researched took three days to return results, Profiles offered a user-friendly assessment process with immediate results.

The headline is that Cardy and his team took the business to peak performance with their strategy and focus. “We had double-digit sales and profit growth for a decade,” he said. At the end of his time there, the company had grown to 40 Canadian branches. “They produced more bottom-line profit dollars than four other divisions in the United States, which were doing the same job with twice as many branches,” Cardy said.

While still leading the Canadian division, Cardy relocated to the United Kingdom to take over operations there. He became vice president of the international division, and after three years – during a recession – achieved another turnaround, amidst big differences in culture and attitudes toward work. With assessments providing the bridge to success, Cardy cleaned up the operations and reduced costs the first year. In the second year, the organization reaped profits. In his third year, the company sold – after Cardy turned it around.

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## QUICK FACTS

**\$5 Million**

saved in recruitment cost and retention when the assessments were used during the hiring process

**591% less  
attrition**

of employees from 1998 thru 2008

**500% increase!**

Average sales per rep went from \$300,000 to \$1.8 million

“Once again, we used the assessment process for hiring,” Cardy said. “Very few individuals came close to the performance model we had developed in Canada. We looked at the selling side, and the majority would rather go to the dentist than sell.” The huge cultural differences included a highly unionized environment.

Even in this atmosphere, the assessments worked. “They were absolutely seamless,” Cardy said. The reason? “We were looking for the same thing. The people were the wrong fit for the job. It was not hard at all to find the right people despite the cultural differences.” Promotions also occurred smoothly with assessments guiding the way. “And we reduced conflict right out of the gate because we knew how to manage each individual.”

## The Process

Cardy was a change agent with the right tools – three Profiles assessments and Dale Carnegie. He is an award-winning Dale Carnegie business coach, and he quickly developed a belief in Profiles products, gained a clear understanding of how they work, and obtained phenomenal results using assessments.

He found the assessments he needed online, with Profiles popping out during a search. Then he asked Susan Hanson, another Profiles strategic partner in Canada, to meet with him. Hanson showed Cardy specific information about attracting and onboarding talent that struck home as he considered the 600 percent turnover. “We were not hiring the right people; we were not keeping the right people. We were understaffed. I knew we were not going to go anywhere unless we hired the right people.”

The Carnegie and Profiles processes worked well together then and still do, Cardy said. For example, once he found the right person for a sales representative job using ProfileXT®, he used Dale Carnegie’s Sales Advantage program for training. “I wanted to know that I had the right person and how they would show up in the sales cycle. If I understood from the beginning that they needed support, they would immediately go to Sales Advantage. It gave them a model to follow, words to say,” Cardy said. Sales Advantage also provided the context of what the expectations were in a selling organization.

“I have been a part of other sales training processes, and if the training holds people accountable and matches the business model, it will work,” said Cardy. “If I had a branch manager or account representative who was struggling to close accounts, I would go to the Profiles assessment on the sales side and find

“If I had a branch manager or account representative who was struggling to close accounts, I would go to the Profiles assessment on the sales side and find out why. The answer is always there.”

out why. The answer is always there. I always got the team leader to use the coaching report. It gave very specific information.

“The old way was to fire them,” he added. “We did not do that. I eventually got the turnover down to nine percent. No one had ever achieved that in the history of the company. A few have gotten close. I attribute that to Profiles.”

He summed up each Profiles assessment as follows:

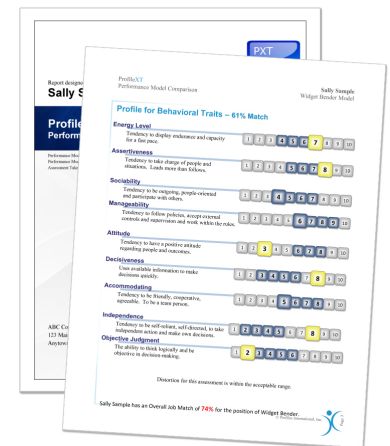
### ProfileXT®

The ProfileXT® (PXT) assessment’s job fit section told Cardy whether the person he was looking at suited the position he had open. If so, he had a decision to make: “It helped me decide whether to go on in the interview process.” This step saves employers from using valuable recruitment and hiring time on people who are wrong for the job.

The PXT also provides a coaching aid for employees several months after they come on board. Cardy describes this as an employee’s “instruction manual.”

“When they were outside the performance model, we studied the coaching report. I provided it to the employee directly and would say, ‘This is how the assessment is suggesting I coach you for better performance. Does this make sense to you?’ They were very appreciative,” Cardy said.

He also sent managers back to the assessments when the hiring system seemed to falter. For example, one manager had difficulty keeping customer service representatives. One arrived at work and stayed on the job only one hour, and another lasted just a bit longer. “I had access to the Profiles assessments. I got the manager on the phone and asked him how much the assessments helped make the decision on hiring the last two, because the assessments said neither was the right fit. He had just opted not to use the assessments. I pointed out that his method was not working. So he went back to using the assessments and people didn’t leave in the first hour.”





## KEY TAKEAWAY

- The ProfileXT® offered information regarding job fit and is described as the employee’s “instruction manual”
- The 7 Critical Sales Behaviors in the PSA were critical for understanding how a salesperson sold. It paved the path of focused sales training.
- The CheckPoint360<sup>o</sup>™ helped leaders understand how they were getting in the way of their own performance and happiness

### Profiles Sales Assessment™

The Profiles Sales Assessment® (PSA) provided many of the same qualities as the PXT, but also revealed how an employee would appear in the sales cycle. “That is equally as important as the hiring decision, because I needed to understand how that employee would sell. It told me whether I needed to zero in on any area, such as closing. It gave me an area to focus on.”

When he shared that information with salespeople, they appreciated it, Cardy said. If they had call reluctance, the PSA showed them how to overcome it. “The assessment gave people permission to become comfortable in sales,” he said. Salespeople often don’t want to admit they are salespeople, but he noted that sales is really about providing business solutions and helping people get what they want or need. “Doing sales is a mindset. It’s about confidence, but it’s also about being supported and being coached.”



Hiring the right people for sales and coaching them well resulted in company gains that far-surpassed goals, Cardy said. “We expected our account representatives to achieve \$300,000 in a year. As a result of using Profiles, we achieved over a million per account rep.” Then the average went up to \$1.8 million – except for two sales representatives who sold almost \$3 million each.

To achieve financial success, salespeople adopted a goal of making two appointments a day or 10 per week. “Out of six appointments, I knew they could close 50 percent or greater. We consistently led the company in new accounts,” he added. “Some branches got 18 or 20 new accounts per week. But we had to hire the right person with the mindset to do the work at hand.”

### CheckPoint 360<sup>o</sup>™

The teams Cardy trained in Canada and the United Kingdom had never seen a 360-degree assessment, in which they were able to see themselves the way others – colleagues, leaders, and subordinates – saw them. “Pretty consistently, people had no idea how they were showing up. They were getting in the way of their own performance and happiness. Then they got



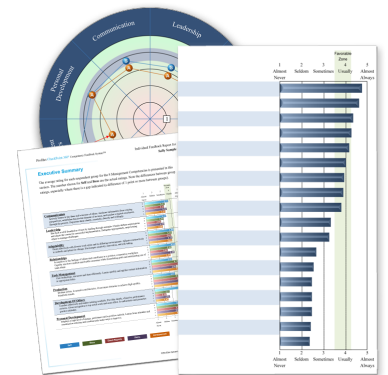
## KEY TAKEAWAY

- Profiles offers assessments that drive improvement across industries and countries

to see what they were doing well.”

This provided workers with a baseline for their self-development. “Mine as well,” added Cardy. “After two years, we looked at how they were moving, and they realized we were serious about how they were doing in becoming better leaders.”

When Cardy examined himself and how he communicated, he realized that some people were not operating on the same level verbally that he was. “I consciously slowed down and repeated things. I asked them questions. People appreciated that. It helped me become more effective.”



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## Summary

It’s important to note that Profiles offers assessments that drive improvement across industries. Before delving into the staffing business, Cardy worked in the hospitality industry – a completely different milieu. “I was the national director of training for a restaurant. The food business is a service industry. People come to your restaurant because they want to.

“The staffing business is a sales industry. Nothing happens unless you sell something. In staffing, there is no brand awareness.”

Further, he noted, there are differences between U.S.-based and Canadian-based firms, and between publicly traded and private firms. Public firms tend to be ruthless when dealing with people, he said, noting that he was told to fire people who were not doing the job. But Canadian labor standards are stringent, and workers cannot be fired without cause. In the staffing business, the workers he dealt with needed sales training, but some had never had it, so he instituted a training program immediately. “That changed the culture. People enjoyed being there. They made good bonus money, good commissions. It was more like a family than a work environment.”

He said the three-pronged plan he adopted would work for any industry:

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## KEY TAKEAWAY

### Summary

- With the help of the assessments, the company was able to stop the revolving door for Branch Managers and surpass the hopes of growth with double-digit growth and profit growth consistently for 10 years.

- Use Profiles' assessments and hire the right person.
- Train them.
- Hold employees accountable, because accountability – doing what you say you are going to – is the basis of integrity.

“I really do it because I believe in it,  
believe it works and enjoy doing it”

### A Look Ahead

Cardy established his own coaching and training business in 2009 and works with companies that have 500 employees or more. “These are larger organizations than I have approached before, and it’s working well.”

He also is continuing as a certified business coach with Dale Carnegie. The combination is rewarding, and “not like work,” he said. “I really do it because I believe in it, believe it works and enjoy doing it.”

He also enjoys the flexibility of being an entrepreneur. “I like not having a boss other than the one in the mirror. It gives you freedom. As you gain success, it feels more rewarding than a paycheck.”