

Adaptive Pressure Calibration

A Positioning Paper for a Sales Behaviour Calibration Tool — mapping normal-state behaviour and pressure-state drift across the Hunter–Farmer Continuum

Paul Roebuck • Version 1 — Working Blueprint

Core question: Who does this person become when pressure arrives?

Public positioning paper. The instrument itself — the item bank and the scoring model — is held as a trade secret and is not included here.

Executive Summary

Adaptive Pressure Calibration (APC) is a proposed behavioural calibration tool for sales, leadership and performance environments. It is designed to identify where a person naturally sits on the Hunter-Farmer continuum under normal conditions, and where they drift when pressure, criticism, rejection, loss, uncertainty or exposure arrives.

The central proposition is simple: most sales assessment systems measure what a person says they are like in stable conditions. APC attempts to measure who they become under commercial pressure.

The tool is grounded in the wider Shame-Response Continuum framework. That framework proposes that people do not simply have fixed personality traits; they regulate pressure directionally. Some move inward, becoming over-responsible, vigilant, perfectionistic or relationally over-attuned. Others move outward, becoming more forceful, defended, competitive, momentum-driven or blame-protective. A smaller number remain sufficiently regulated to move flexibly between pursuit, relationship, recovery and reflection.

In sales language, this can be expressed as a calibrated Hunter-Farmer spectrum. Farmer-leaning patterns tend to regulate through value, trust, service, detail and relational stability. Hunter-leaning patterns tend to regulate through pursuit, winning, momentum, recovery and competitive activation. Neither is better. Both can be commercially powerful. Both can become damaging when rigid, mismatched or overused.

APC is not a clinical instrument. It is not intended to diagnose, label or reduce people. It is a practical calibration framework intended to improve recruitment, role-fit, sales coaching, leadership development, team composition and pressure management.

1. What APC Is

Adaptive Pressure Calibration is a structured behavioural mapping system. It asks a participant a series of normal-state, pressure-state and scenario-based questions. It then compares how the

person describes themselves in calm conditions with how they report behaving when commercial pressure arrives.

The core output is not a personality type. The core output is a movement map.

Calibration Area	Meaning
Normal-state position	Where the person naturally sits when calm: farmer-leaning, balanced, hunter-leaning or mixed.
Pressure-state drift	Where the person moves when criticised, rejected, challenged, exposed or placed under target pressure.
Rigidity	How fixed or flexible the person becomes under pressure.
Trigger sensitivity	Which commercial pressures activate the strongest movement.
Recovery pattern	How quickly and cleanly the person returns toward regulated functioning.
Role-fit implications	How the pattern may support or compromise hunting, farming, leadership or hybrid sales roles.

2. Who It Is For

APC is initially best suited to commercial environments where performance depends on behaviour under pressure rather than technical capability alone.

Sales leaders building or balancing new-business and account-management teams.

Recruiters assessing hunter, farmer or hybrid sales suitability.

Executive coaches working with sales directors, account directors, founders and commercial leaders.

Businesses with recurring problems around defensive selling, poor follow-up, weak relationship development, burnout or inconsistent resilience.

Managers trying to understand why the same person performs well in one sales context and poorly in another.

Individuals seeking to understand why rejection, targets, criticism or client dissatisfaction changes their behaviour.

The most immediate application is sales because sales exposes rejection, status, identity, targets, uncertainty and public comparison quickly. It is therefore an ideal environment in which to observe pressure-state behaviour.

3. What It Is Not

It is not a clinical diagnostic tool.

It is not a mental health assessment.

It is not a pass/fail recruitment test.

It is not a simple personality type system.

It is not a claim that all hunters are FOF or all farmers are NGE.

It is not a deterministic predictor of success.

It is not a replacement for sales judgement, interview evidence, manager observation or performance data.

The tool should be positioned as a calibration aid: a way of making pressure behaviour more visible, more discussable and more coachable.

4. The Underlying Theory

APC draws from the Shame-Response Continuum. The continuum proposes that when shame, criticism, uncertainty, rejection or identity threat appears, people often regulate that pressure directionally.

Some regulate inward. They become more self-critical, more vigilant, more responsible, more careful, more relationally attuned and more concerned with not disappointing others.

Others regulate outward. They become more defended, more assertive, more competitive, more controlling, more urgent and more concerned with not losing, not looking weak or not being exposed.

The sales lens translates these movements into a commercial continuum: farmer-leaning value regulation at one end, hunter-leaning momentum regulation at the other, and adaptive flexibility in the centre.

The core mechanism

Stage	Description
1. Emotional or commercial pressure	Rejection, criticism, lost deal, client dissatisfaction, missed target, competitor threat, public challenge.
2. Shame / exposure activation	The person experiences some version of “What does this mean about me?”
3. Directional regulation	The person moves inward, outward or toward regulated integration.
4. Behavioural adaptation	Over-service, control, pursuit, avoidance, perfectionism, dominance, explanation, withdrawal, recovery.
5. Identity reinforcement	The adaptation becomes admired, rewarded, repeated and eventually mistaken for “who I am”.

5. The Hunter-Farmer Reconciliation

Traditional sales language often treats hunters and farmers as role preferences. APC reframes them as adaptation-compatible behavioural patterns.

A hunter is not simply someone who likes new business. A strong hunter pattern may be someone who regulates commercial pressure through pursuit, motion, outcome focus, rejection displacement and competitive activation.

A farmer is not simply someone who likes relationships. A strong farmer pattern may be someone who regulates commercial pressure through value, trust, dependability, emotional attunement and becoming indispensable.

This reframing matters because it explains why some people thrive in one commercial environment and deteriorate in another.

Position	Commercial Strength	Pressure Risk
Farmer-leaning / inward regulation	Value, trust, service, detail, relationship, retention, care, continuity.	Over-responsibility, conflict avoidance, emotional carrying, slow recovery after criticism, over-servicing.
Regulated centre	Flexible movement between pursuit and care; can challenge without rupturing; can recover without hardening.	Possible under-use in crude sales cultures that reward extremes.
Hunter-leaning / outward regulation	Momentum, pursuit, winning, recovery, confidence projection, competitive energy, risk appetite.	Defensiveness, transactional behaviour, poor listening, narrative control, blame externalisation.

6. The Central Calibration Question

The tool should ask, directly and indirectly:

Where does this person sit normally, and where do they drift under pressure?

That creates two separate readings.

Reading	Purpose
Baseline position	The person's normal commercial style when not under active threat.
Pressure drift	The person's movement when exposed to rejection, criticism, uncertainty, blame, loss or performance scrutiny.

The difference between these two readings is one of the most valuable parts of the tool. Many people know who they are when calm. Far fewer know who they become when pressure removes the performance.

7. What APC Calibrates

The tool should not produce a single crude score. It should produce a profile across several dimensions.

Dimension	What it calibrates
Direction	Does pressure move the person inward, outward or toward regulated integration?
Hunter-Farmer baseline	Where does the person sit in normal sales conditions?
Pressure drift	How far does the person move from baseline under commercial pressure?
Rigidity	How fixed, repetitive or automatic is the adaptation?
Trigger sensitivity	Which pressures activate the strongest movement?
Recovery pattern	How quickly does the person return to centre after pressure?
Role compatibility	Which sales context rewards this adaptation?
Risk pattern	What happens when the adaptation is overused?
Development focus	What capability would increase adaptive flexibility?

The instrument — held

The question architecture, the scoring and computation model, and the sample item bank are held as a trade secret and are not published here. They are available under licence or for a validation partnership: hello@paulroebuck.co.uk.

10. Report Outputs

The participant report should avoid shaming language. It should be clear, respectful and commercially useful.

Recommended report sections

Your normal-state commercial style.

Your pressure-state drift.

Your Hunter-Farmer position.

Your strongest commercial adaptation.

Your likely sales strengths.

Your trigger zones.

Your risk pattern under fatigue or exposure.

Your recovery pattern.

Your role-fit implications.

Your development focus.

Sample output language

“Your baseline profile is moderately Farmer-leaning. You appear to regulate commercial pressure through trust, detail, responsiveness and becoming valuable to the client. Under pressure, especially criticism or client dissatisfaction, you drift further inward. This may make you highly reliable and attentive, but may also lead to over-servicing, conflict avoidance and emotional over-carrying. Your development edge is not to become more aggressive, but to build the capacity to challenge commercially without experiencing relational risk as personal failure.”

11. Profile Families

A useful APC system may identify profile families rather than fixed types. These should be descriptive, not diagnostic.

Profile Family	Strength	Risk
Relational Farmer	Trust, care, retention, continuity.	Over-carrying, conflict avoidance.
Strategic Farmer	Account growth, context, long-term value.	Slow pursuit, over-analysis.
Balanced Commercial Operator	Flexible pursuit and relationship behaviour.	May be under-recognised in extreme sales cultures.
Momentum Hunter	High activity, fast recovery, prospecting energy.	Thin relationship depth, low reflection.
Dominant Hunter	Challenge, confidence, competitive energy.	Defensiveness, client resistance, blame risk.
Pressure Oscillator	Can shift between inward and outward rapidly.	Inconsistency, confusion for others.

12. Commercial Applications

Application	Value
Recruitment	Clarifies role-fit beyond interview performance and sales charisma.
Sales team design	Balances hunter/farmer capacity across pipeline generation, conversion, retention and growth.
Coaching	Targets pressure drift rather than generic sales skill.

Application	Value
Leadership development	Shows how managers regulate shame, blame, targets and public accountability.
Burnout prevention	Identifies over-functioning farmers and identity-fused hunters.
Culture mapping	Identifies whether teams over-reward dominance, over-carrying, avoidance or blame.
Account strategy	Matches behavioural strengths to client relationship stage.

13. Ethical and Practical Guardrails

Because this tool deals with pressure, shame and adaptation, it must be used carefully.

Do not use the tool to stigmatise or exclude people crudely.

Do not describe someone as damaged, weak, narcissistic or psychologically flawed.

Do not present outputs as clinical truth.

Do not use one calibration result as a sole recruitment decision.

Do not expose sensitive psychological language unnecessarily in corporate settings.

Keep commercial reports behavioural, practical and development-focused.

Use deeper shame/disintegration language only in appropriate coaching or therapeutic contexts.

14. Validation Roadmap

The first version of APC should be treated as a structured behavioural hypothesis. The correct next step is not to claim validation, but to gather evidence.

Phase	Activity	Purpose
Phase 1	Expert review	Sales leaders, coaches, therapists and psychologists review construct clarity.
Phase 2	Pilot questionnaire	Small sample of salespeople complete baseline and pressure-state questions.
Phase 3	Manager calibration	Compare self-report with manager observation.
Phase 4	Performance mapping	Compare patterns with role type, burnout, retention, client satisfaction and sales outcomes.
Phase 5	Refinement	Remove weak items, strengthen scenario questions, improve scoring reliability.

Phase	Activity	Purpose
Phase 6	Formal validation	Explore psychometric reliability, construct validity and predictive usefulness.

15. Minimum Viable Tool

A first practical version does not need full psychometric sophistication. It needs to be useful, safe and recognisable.

20 baseline questions.

20 pressure-state questions.

8 sales scenarios.

Optional manager-observation form.

Simple directional scoring.

One-page participant report.

One-page manager interpretation guide.

Clear non-diagnostic disclaimer.

16. Why This Matters

Sales performance is rarely just about skill. It is about behaviour under pressure.

Two people can know the same sales process, sell the same product and receive the same training, yet respond completely differently when rejected, challenged, blamed or exposed.

One over-carries. One over-defends. One avoids the difficult challenge. One pushes too hard. One collapses privately. One blames publicly. One becomes indispensable. One becomes untouchable.

APC attempts to make that movement visible.

The point is not to label people. The point is to understand what pressure does to them.

Because in sales, leadership and performance environments, the person you get under pressure is often the person who determines the outcome.

17. Closing Position Statement

Adaptive Pressure Calibration is a proposed behavioural calibration system for understanding normal-state commercial style and pressure-state drift across the Hunter-Farmer continuum.

Its central claim is that the most useful sales insight may not be “What kind of salesperson is this?” but “Where does this person move when pressure arrives?”

The commercial value lies in role fit, coaching precision, team balance, burnout prevention and better understanding of how people regulate rejection, criticism, uncertainty and identity threat.

The human value lies in helping people see the adaptation without shame.

Not to judge it. Not to pathologise it. But to make it visible enough to work with.

Where does the shame go?

In sales, it often becomes the role.

The hunter survives through motion. The farmer survives through value. The best performers learn how to move between both without losing themselves.