

Hiring Rhett for a sales role is inadvisable due to the presence of troubling personality traits that fall under the "dark triad": Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (according to [1]). Individuals who exhibit these traits can temporarily boost performance, particularly in high-stakes, high-pressure roles like sales. However, their long-term impact on team dynamics, company culture, and reputation can be damaging. Here's a closer look at why these traits are problematic for a performance-critical role within the organization:

1) Machiavellianism: According to [2] The Machiavellian personality is defined by three sets of interrelated values. First is having an avowed belief in the effectiveness of manipulative tactics in dealing with other people. Second, having a cynical view of human nature. Third, having a moral outlook that puts expediency above principle. Individuals with this personality, can yield short-term success in sales due to their skill in “reading” clients and adapting strategies accordingly. However, when unchecked, these tendencies can foster a highly negative work atmosphere.

In Rhett’s case, his manipulative behavior is evident in how he interacts with team members. For instance, he often isolates colleagues whom he perceives as less beneficial to his personal agenda, including those who question or challenge his approach. Team members like Malcolm have reported feeling excluded and disempowered, as Rhett seems to form “inner circles” of favored individuals. This favoritism not only damages morale but also creates divisions within the team, fostering an environment where collaboration is undermined. While such manipulation may serve short-term sales goals, it destabilizes the supportive, collaborative culture that the company needs to bring out the best in each individual for high productivity. In this way, transitioning to a new product line will not be overly challenging for the company.

2) Narcissism: Narcissists tend to exaggerate their achievements, avoid criticism, refuse to compromise, and seek relationships only with admiring individuals [3]. To others, they often appear arrogant, self-promoting, aggressive, and generally less likable [4]. Narcissists frequently exhibit confidence and charm, which can be highly effective in a sales role. Rhett’s charisma helps him succeed in winning clients, boosting his sales numbers, and potentially securing high-value contracts for the company.

3) Psychopathy: Traits associated with psychopathy, such as a lack of empathy and impulsivity, may explain Rhett's irresponsible actions and failure to consider the repercussions of his behavior. While these traits may encourage risk-taking, they can also lead to behaviors that undermine team morale, cohesion, and mutual respect among peers.

While Rhett's superficial charm and manipulative skills may drive immediate sales, the long-term impact on the company would likely be highly damaging. The hostile and divisive environment he fosters could result in higher turnover, as valued employees may leave to escape a negative workplace culture. Additionally, any incidents of perceived harassment, favoritism, or mistreatment could expose the company to legal liabilities, which would be costly both financially and reputationally. His behavior may also erode trust with clients, especially if his impulsive and unempathetic nature influences how he manages client relationships. Inconsistent or transactional interactions with clients can harm the company's reputation, leading to a decrease in repeat business and referrals. If left unchecked, this toxic environment could extend beyond his immediate team, weakening the overall culture and making it challenging to attract and retain talent in the future. For these reasons, it would be beneficial for both the company and its employees to refrain from hiring Rhett, allowing other sales team members the opportunity to grow and develop their skills over time.

[1] [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566\(02\)00505-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00505-6) : The Dark Triad of personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, Journal of Research in Personality Volume 36, Issue 6, December 2002, Pages 556-563

[2] doi: 10.1037/a0025679 : O'Boyle EH, Forsyth DR, Banks GC, McDaniel MA. A meta-analysis of the Dark Triad and work behavior: a social exchange perspective. J Appl Psychol.

[3] <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0022-3514.77.6.1254> Narcissism and romantic attraction : W. K. Campbell, 1999

[4] <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6261.2008.01416.x> In Search of Distress Risk