

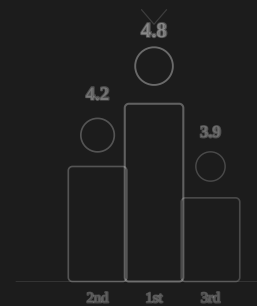
The A-Player Score: A-Player Score

THE 50 FACTOR — GROWTH FACTOR #06

Implement an A-Player Score for Every Role

The Complete Implementation Guide

BY SCOTT SCULLY



Principle #6: Implement an A-Player Score for Every Role

The Complete Implementation Guide

This white paper is a companion to Chapter 6 of The 50 Factor by Scott Scully. The book tells the story. This guide gives you the step-by-step playbook to build a daily, objective scoring system that transforms how you hire, train, coach, promote, and hold people accountable.

Why This Principle Matters

Most employees finish their workday with no idea whether they won or lost. They feel busy. They feel tired. But they can't point to a number and say *"I hit it today."*

Without that clarity, performance becomes subjective. Feedback becomes vague. Promotions feel political. Bonuses feel arbitrary. And the person who's working harder than everyone else has no way to prove it — which means they eventually stop working harder.

An A-Player Score fixes all of this. It's a daily, objective, trackable number built from 3–5 measurable behaviors that, when done consistently, produce great outcomes. It gives every person on your team a scoreboard — visible in real time — that tells them whether they won the day.

But it's more than a daily metric. When built correctly, the A-Player Score becomes the spine of your entire people operation:

- **Hiring:** You hire people who can hit the score.
- **Training:** You train to the score's component behaviors.
- **Coaching:** You coach to the score's gaps in weekly 1:1s.
- **Promotion:** 12 months of consistently hitting the score = candidate for the next role.

- **Accountability:** Misses trigger the coaching conversation (Principle #2), not termination.
- **Firing:** Sustained inability to hit the score — after real coaching and support — means the role isn't the right fit.

Every decision about a person flows through the same objective system. No politics. No favoritism. No "I like this person so I'll overlook their numbers." The score is the score.

The Two Guardrails

Before you build an A-Player Score for any role, it must pass both guardrails:

Guardrail 1: It Must Be Objective

If you can't score it without a judgment call, don't put it on the list. The whole power of the A-Player Score is that it removes subjectivity. If a behavior requires a manager's opinion to evaluate, it belongs on the quality scorecard (Principle #5), not on the daily A-Player Score.

Fails the test: "Has a positive attitude." "Shows initiative." "Is a team player." These are personality assessments, not measurable behaviors.

Passes the test: "Made 60+ outbound calls." "Arrived on time for all scheduled calls." "Submitted all required documentation before 5 PM." "Booked 2+ qualified meetings." These are binary or countable — they happened or they didn't.

Guardrail 2: It Must Be Trackable Daily

If you can't measure it today, don't put it on the list. The A-Player Score is a daily operating metric. It tells you at the end of every day whether the person did the behaviors that produce results.

Fails the test: "Closed \$50K in revenue this month." Revenue is an output — it's influenced by timing, territory, market conditions, and luck. Scoring outputs daily is deeply unfair because the person may have done everything right and the deal still slipped to next month.

Passes the test: "Made 60 calls." "Had 8 meaningful conversations." "Booked 3 meetings." "Completed 5 deliverables." These are inputs — activities the person controls today, regardless of external factors.

The principle behind the guardrails: Measure inputs daily. Measure outputs monthly and quarterly. Inputs are the activities that cause outputs. If someone consistently does the right inputs at the right quality level, the outputs will follow. If they don't follow, the score needs recalibration — not the person.

The Structure

Every A-Player Score follows the same format:

3–5 behaviors per role. Not 8. Not 12. Three to five. Each one must pass both guardrails. If you can't get it down to five, you're measuring noise. The constraint forces you to identify the behaviors that actually matter — the ones most correlated with real outcomes.

Each behavior is weighted. Weights must sum to 100%. The behavior most correlated with outcomes gets the highest weight. A sales rep's "meaningful conversations" (35%) is weighted higher than "calls made" (25%) because conversations drive meetings, but calls drive conversations. The weight creates a hierarchy of importance.

Rolls up to a single daily number. The weighted scores combine into one number that the team member can see at the end of every day. "I scored 87 today." That clarity — that single, honest number — changes behavior more than any coaching conversation.

Visible in real time or at end of day. The team member shouldn't have to wait for their manager to tell them how they did. They should be able to look at their own scorecard and know. Self-awareness precedes self-correction.

The Critical Rule: Inputs, Not Outputs

This rule is so important it deserves its own section, because it's the mistake most founders make when building their first A-Player Score.

Inputs are activities the person controls today. Calls made. Emails sent. Deliverables completed. Meetings attended. Documentation submitted. Training modules completed.

Outputs are results that are influenced by factors beyond the person's control. Revenue closed. Client retention rate. NPS score. Proposal win rate.

On the daily score, you measure inputs only. Here's why:

Imagine two sales reps. Rep A made 80 calls, had 12 conversations, booked 4 meetings, and prepared 2 proposals today. Rep B made 30 calls, had 3 conversations, booked 0 meetings, and spent the afternoon "working on strategy."

If you measure by outputs (revenue), you might not know the difference for 60–90 days. By then, Rep B has coasted for an entire quarter. If you measure by inputs (daily behaviors), you know by 5 PM on Day 1 that there's a gap — and you can coach it tomorrow.

Outputs get measured too — just not daily. Revenue, close rate, retention, client satisfaction — these are reviewed monthly and quarterly. They validate that the daily inputs are actually producing results. If the inputs are consistently strong but the outputs are weak, the A-Player Score needs adjustment — you're measuring the wrong behaviors.

The Five A's: The A-Player Culture Standard

Beyond the daily score — which is role-specific — you need a company-wide definition of what an A-Player is as a person. Not what they do, but who they are. The values they embody. The traits that make someone right for your culture, regardless of their role.

One framework that works across every industry and every role size:

The Five A's

Attitude. Positive energy. Growth mindset. Lifts the room instead of draining it. Doesn't complain without offering a solution. When something goes wrong, asks "how do we fix it?" not "whose fault is it?"

Adaptable. Handles change without resistance. Takes on new roles, new responsibilities, new challenges. Doesn't cling to "the way we've always done it." In a growing company, the job changes every six months. Adaptable people thrive in that environment. Rigid people break.

Aware. Understands how their work connects to the business, the client, and the team. Doesn't operate in a vacuum. Knows why what they do matters and how it affects the person downstream from them. Self-aware — can assess their own performance honestly, without ego.

Ambitious. Wants to grow. Pushes for better. Not content with coasting. Asks for feedback. Seeks development. Volunteers for stretch assignments. The difference between a B-player and an A-player is often nothing more than ambition — one wants to get better, the other wants to stay comfortable.

Accountable. Owns outcomes. Doesn't make excuses. When they miss, they say "I missed" — not "the system failed" or "the client was unreasonable." Takes personal responsibility for their results and follows through on commitments.

How the Five A's Work in Practice

In hiring: Every interview includes behavioral questions mapped to the Five A's. "Tell me about a time you had to adapt to a major change at work." "Describe a situation where you were accountable for a mistake." You're not just screening for skills — you're screening for character.

In onboarding: New hires learn the Five A's in their first week. They understand: this is what our culture values. These are the traits that get recognized, promoted, and celebrated here.

In recognition (Principle #1): When you recognize someone publicly, tie it to a specific A: "Sarah showed incredible Adaptability this week when she took on the Henderson account with zero notice and delivered a flawless QBR."

In performance conversations (Principle #2): When you coach someone, reference the Five A's: "I need to see more Accountability in how you handle missed deadlines. When something slips, I need to hear what happened and what you're going to do differently — not why it wasn't your fault."

In promotions: Promotions require sustained A-Player Scores *and* demonstrated strength in the Five A's. You can't be promoted on numbers alone if your attitude drains the team.

On the walls: Put them up. In the break room. In the conference room. On the onboarding materials. On the career development framework. Make them visible, constantly, until they become the ambient language of your culture.

How to Build an A-Player Score: Step by Step

Step 1: Pick One Role

Start with the revenue-generating role closest to delivery — the role where daily behavior most directly affects company outcomes. For most B2B services companies, this is the delivery/operations role or the sales development role.

Step 2: Schedule 90 Minutes With Your Top Performer

Not the manager. The person who actually does the role and does it best. Managers have theories about what top performers do. Top performers *know*.

The question to ask: *"What are the 3–5 things you do every single day that, if you do them consistently, produce great results?"*

Let them talk. Take notes. Probe for specificity: "You said 'make enough calls.' How many is enough? What makes a call productive versus wasted?" Push until you have 3–5 concrete, countable, daily behaviors.

Step 3: Assign Weights

Not all behaviors are equally important. The behavior most correlated with outcomes gets the highest weight.

Method: Ask your top performer: "If you could only do one of these five things for a week, which one would have the biggest impact on your results?" That's your highest-weighted behavior. Work backward from there.

Example (Business Development Rep):

Notice: no "revenue closed." That's an output. It gets measured monthly. The daily score measures the behaviors that *produce* revenue.

Step 4: Build the Tracking Sheet

A simple spreadsheet. Team member names down the left. Days of the week across the top. Each cell shows the daily score. Auto-calculates the weighted total.

The person can see their own score in real time. The manager can see the whole team's scores at a glance. No ambiguity. No opinions. Just numbers.

Step 5: Pilot for 30 Days

Run the A-Player Score for one team for 30 days before rolling out company-wide. During the pilot, ask three validation questions:

1. **Does the score correlate with actual outcomes?** (Are the people with the highest daily scores also producing the best monthly results?) 2. **Is it gaming-resistant?** (Can someone hit a high score by doing low-quality work? If so, add a quality dimension or adjust weights.) 3. **Does the team understand it?** (Can every person explain what's being measured and why?)

If the score doesn't correlate with outcomes, adjust the behaviors or weights. If it does — you've found the formula. Roll it out.

Step 6: Roll Out and Integrate

Once validated, the A-Player Score becomes part of the daily operating rhythm:

- **Morning:** Team sees their targets.
 - **End of day:** Team logs their numbers. Score auto-calculates.
 - **Weekly 1:1:** Manager and team member review the week's scores together. Highs get recognized (Principle #1). Lows get coached (Principle #2).
 - **Monthly:** Compare A-Player Scores to outputs (revenue, retention, etc.) to validate the model.
 - **Quarterly:** Calibrate. Are the weights right? Are the behaviors still the right ones? As the role evolves, the score should evolve too.
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Building A-Player Scores for Other Roles

Once the first role's score is validated and running, build the next one. Follow the same process — same 90-minute session with the top performer, same structure, same pilot.

Build order: 1. Delivery / Operations (or Sales Development) 2. Sales (closing role) 3. Client Services / Account Management 4. Marketing 5. Support / Admin functions

Roles without clean daily cycles: Some roles — legal, finance, HR, project management — don't produce countable daily outputs. For these roles, use the quality scorecard (Principle #5) as the primary metric and build a weekly or monthly A-Player rubric as the secondary tool. Not every role needs a daily score. Every role needs a score.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Mistake #1: Measuring outputs instead of inputs. Revenue closed, retention rate, NPS score — these are monthly/quarterly metrics, not daily ones. The daily score must measure behaviors the person controls today.

Mistake #2: Too many behaviors. If you're measuring 8–10 things, you're measuring noise. 3–5 is the range. The constraint is a feature — it forces you to identify what really matters.

Mistake #3: Building the score without the top performer. Managers have opinions about what top performers do. Top performers have data. Use the data.

Mistake #4: Setting the score and never updating it. Roles change. Markets change. Your company changes. The A-Player Score should be recalibrated quarterly — not the targets, but the behaviors and weights. Are you still measuring the right things?

Mistake #5: Making it punitive instead of developmental. The A-Player Score is a coaching tool, not a punishment tool. A low score triggers a conversation: "What happened? What do you need?" — not a write-up.

Mistake #6: Not connecting the score to recognition and accountability. The A-Player Score only works when it connects to Principle #1 (recognize top scores publicly) and Principle #2 (coach low scores privately). Without those connections, it's just a spreadsheet nobody cares about.

Mistake #7: Scoring individuals but not sharing team averages. Healthy competition is a feature, not a bug. When the team can see the average daily score and where they stand relative to it, performance lifts across the board. The person at 65 wants to get to 80 because they can see that 80 is possible — their colleague is doing it every day.

Quick-Start Checklist

- ✓ ☐ Pick one role (delivery or sales)
 - ✓ ☐ Schedule 90 minutes with your top performer in that role
 - ✓ ☐ Ask: "What are the 3–5 things you do every day that produce great results?"
 - ✓ ☐ Push for specificity until each behavior is countable and daily
 - ✓ ☐ Assign weights (sum to 100%)
 - ✓ ☐ Build the tracking sheet (use the provided template)
 - ✓ ☐ Pilot for 30 days with one team
 - ✓ ☐ Validate: does the score correlate with actual outcomes?
 - ✓ ☐ Adjust behaviors or weights if needed
 - ✓ ☐ Roll out to the full team in that role
 - ✓ ☐ Integrate into weekly 1:1s (Principles #1 and #2)
 - ✓ ☐ Build the next role's A-Player Score
 - ✓ ☐ Define the Five A's for your company and put them on the walls
 - ✓ ☐ Incorporate the Five A's into your hiring interview process
 - ✓ ☐ Quarterly: recalibrate behaviors and weights
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Implementation Tools

Ready-to-use templates for this Growth Factor

XLSX

A-Player Score Template — Sales

Columns: Team Member, Calls Made (25%), Conversations (35%), Meetings Booked (30%), Discovery Quality (10%), Daily Score

XLSX

A-Player Score Builder — Blank

Columns: Team Member, Calls Made (25%), Conversations (35%), Meetings Booked (30%), Discovery Quality (10%), Daily Score

XLSX

The Five A's Assessment Tool

Columns: Captain, 1:1s (1-5), Feedback (1-5), Scorecard Coaching (1-5), Huddle (1-5), Recognition (1-5), +3 more

PDF

A-Player Score Workshop Guide

Facilitator guide for the 90-minute session

PDF

Interview Questions Mapped to the Five A's

Behavioral interview guide

This is Principle #6 of 50. The A-Player Score is the spine. It connects recognition (#1), accountability (#2), ground truth (#3), the Growth Formula (#4), and quality (#5) into a single, daily operating system. When every person on your team knows whether they won the day — every day — you have built something most companies never achieve: clarity at scale.

Get the book: The 50 Factor by Scott Scully