

THE A-B-C OF SELLING

Sales Skills Training Programme

Learner Material

Learner Name and Surname _____

AREA _____

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THE “A-B-C” OF SELLING

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Purpose of the materials

Purpose of the learning unit

The purpose of this learning unit is to equip you with the necessary skills for you to become a competent sales person, being very effective in personal selling.

Context of the guide

The learning unit is developed for sales people who are either already employed in personal selling or for those who want to start a career in sales.

Outcomes to be achieved

This selling skills training programme is outcome based with the following specific outcomes that will be achieved:

Specific Outcome 1: Be Prepared for Success

- The learner is prepared to address the customer by being properly dressed with a professional appearance.
- The importance of personal hygiene is understood by avoiding three no – no's.
- The characteristics of successful sales people is divided into qualitative and quantitative qualities.

Specific Outcome 2: Approaching the Customer

- The customer is approached in a way that makes them feel comfortable, welcome and wanting.
- The correct language is used during a sales presentation.

Specific Outcome 3: Specific Outcome

- The difference between features, advantages and benefits are defined and different kind of objections are identified.
- Objections are clearly understood for the learner to overcome them satisfactory.

Specific Outcome 4: Closing the sale.

- The meaning of “closing the sale” is explained and understood.
- Learners know when and how to close a sale.
- Various techniques on how to close the sale are introduced effectively.

The design and development of the learning unit materials

The Learner Guide was designed and developed by The Marketing and Sales Academy.

The application of knowledge and skills

Throughout the learning unit you will be required to apply all knowledge and skills by way of focus activities within each module.

The structure of the learning material

The learning unit material is structured into four modules each module is supported by questions and answers which need to be completed before the learner can proceed to the next module.

Assessments

Formative Assessments will take place during facilitation in the form of questions and answers and practical role play exercises to demonstrate understanding for each module.

A final one-on-one practical demonstration will confirm the learner’s ability to implement the “A-B-C” of selling during a sales presentation with a customer.

Module 1

Be prepared for success

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module the candidate will be able to:

- **Understand what the correct physical appearance and dress code is to create a good first impression and to look professional.**
- **Describe the importance of Personal Hygiene and name the three no- no's of personal hygiene**
- **Explain the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of a successful sales person.**

Selling is a very competitive field that offers good communicators, self starters and product experts the opportunity to earn high incomes. The pressure is to produce, especially in a field where compensation is performance based.

You have to understand that selling is a professional career, it is not exclusively for “Wheeler dealer” type personalities, but is more likely to be achieved by smart professional people with a good ear for listening.

Smart people take responsibility for their own lives, actions and results. Sales training is the first step you can take into the sales profession. Gillian Lamb wouldn't have designed the Empire State Building, one of the 7 wonders of the world, without strong foundations.

You must approach your career in the same way. The “A-B-C” of Selling is a powerful foundation from which you can launch your career in sales.



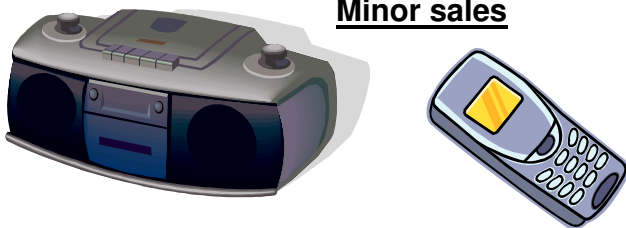
An important building block in selling is attitude. A professional sales person always keep a positive, optimistic attitude, who are able to accept rejection and have the tenacity to proactively generate new business with little or no motivation from others.

Professional sales people do not only rely on companies to offer them jobs, but as self – starters create jobs, though their own business and new opportunities.

In summary, to be successful in sales, you need a rock solid sales training foundation, a positive optimistic attitude linked with a great product and service, and you are already on your way to the pinnacle of your sales career.

The “A-B-C” of selling is specifically designed for sales people who want to be highly successful in minor sales. Minor sales also known as low involvement sales encourage the customer to take the purchasing decision during sales interaction. The final decision making process is much easier than with major sales usually because of the value of the product or service which the customer purchase. Major sales usually involve longer decision making periods, coupled by high value products or services. Major sales also usually involve more than one decision maker whereby minor sales, the customer makes a decision on the spot, to buy or not to by.

Minor sales



Major sales



Physical appearance

The way a salesperson comes across through their appearance and mannerisms creates the first impression, which can make or break a sale. Therefore the salesperson needs to possess certain qualities to create a good impression of the product and the company who is selling the product.

If sales people look sloppy, untidy, grubby and unprofessional, it will adversely affect the attitude of a customer. They will get the impression that your product, your service and the benefits of buying from you are as sloppy, untidy and unprofessional as the person they see in front of them.

Customers are judging your knowledge and your ability by what they can actually see.

Look the part



To reinforce the importance of physical appearance, a good rule is: *“You and your equipment should reflect the price and the value of the products or services you are promoting”*. The first thing you should take stock of is your appearance and the appearance of your equipment. When referring to appearance, it goes further than clothing or uniform. It includes the pen in your hand and the briefcase you’re carrying, in fact every small detail, which the customer may notice.



- Always wear promotional clothing if supplied by client
- No jeans
- No “flip-flops”
- No shorts
- No “spaghetti-strings” or revealing V-necks
- Full shoulder sleeve shirts
- Wear underwear at all times
- Neat corporate look
- All clothing to be neatly ironed
- Smart casual is acceptable
- No distracting accessories



Personal hygiene

The following are the basics of personal hygiene that salespeople need to adhere to, in order to be viewed as a professional salesperson:

- Fresh breath
- Face and the rest of the body needs to be clean
- Clean hands with no extravagant glitter (i.e. excess jewellery etc)
- The use of perfume should not be to extravagant

Three No-No`s of Personal Hygiene

While on the subject of physical appearance, there are three pet hates that need to be excluded completely from the sales environment. The three no-no`s are: dirty fingernails, bad breath and body odour. This lays a weak foundation for the success of the sale.



Qualitative Characteristics of a Successful Salesperson

- A salesperson should be neatly and smartly dressed
- In most instances, it is helpful if the salesperson is outspoken and talkative. In saying this, it's important that the sales person does not rush the sale, be aggressive and force the customer into buying the product. For example, too much information and rushing to close the sale.
- Certain sociable characteristics, such as an outgoing, self assured and extrovert person would enhance a successful sales pitch. Being an extrovert plainly means that a person is not afraid of meeting new people, he normally is the centre of attention. He thrives on situations where he has to meet new people and is not afraid to talk in front of unfamiliar faces.
- The person needs to be well groomed and conscious about personal hygiene. The salesperson needs to be aware of the importance of being clean. He needs to adapt his look according to the environment. i.e. a salesperson selling laptops in corporate environment needs to be clothed in a suit.
- Eye contact needs to be maintained.
- Has to have a low level of fear and anxiety. It is important that the salesperson does not get anxious easily whilst attempting the sale. The sales person needs to be able to confront situations where a customer may bombard him/her with questions and comments about the products being sold. They need to remain cool, calm and collected at all times.
- The person needs to be able to be a good communicator with fluency in English or language the person understands is essential.
- Basic literacy levels/ Mathematics, English and Writing skills are very important to be successful in sales.
- The person needs to be punctual.



Be prepared for success

Specific Outcome 1:

1. What does the successful salesperson want to create through effective appearance and mannerism?

2. Describe the 3 no-no's of personal hygiene

3. Name four qualitative and quantitative characteristics of a successful Salesperson



Module 2

The Approach

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module the candidate will be able to:

- **Understand how to approach the customer in a way that makes them feel comfortable, welcome and wanting to continue a sales type conversation.**
- **Use the correct language when approaching the customer during the sales presentation.**

When two people meet each other in a business encounter there is a certain amount of wariness and aggression.

The sales person's objective at this point of the sale should be to make the customer feel relaxed, at ease and to reduce the level of tension.

Before salespeople can sell any product or service they have to sell themselves. This is the first and most important sale of all. This will create the foundation of trust and credibility that is required for the sale to proceed smoothly. While there are literally hundreds of ways to make a customer feel relaxed, at ease and to reduce the level of tension, I would like to discuss four ways that are highly effective.

1. Smile

Number one is to smile. When we come into contact with a customer for the first time we should smile warmly, sincerely and genuinely. We should give the customer the impression that we are happy to be there with them and that we are looking forward to spending time with them.



It really is difficult for a person to remain hostile in the face of a warm, genuine smile.

2. Eye contact

We must make and hold eye contact. We must look the customer in the eye and let him or her see that we are open, credible and believable people. Have you ever met people who look down at the floor when they greet you? Your first impression is probably, "What have you got to hide?" And if the customer gets this impression of salespeople, a sale will be compromised.



3. Greet friendly by saying something nice

Greet the customer politely, warmly and try to say something nice. For example, “Hi Mr. Jones, I’m pleased to meet you. I must compliment you on the efficient way your secretary set up the appointment for me.



4. Selling techniques

There are many aspects that should be noted by the sales person to be successful as a sales person. The following are selling techniques/guidelines that a salesperson could use as a guide in creating a positive environment when pitching in a sale:

- The potential customer should be greeted in a warm and friendly manner. In doing this, the sales person creates an environment in which the customer feels comfortable and thus easier to approach. E.g. *“Good day, may I please introduce you to an extraordinary new product?”*
- State the purpose. The customer needs to be given clear details of the sales pitch as this will.
- Listen effectively and respond with empathy.
- Clarify the situation. *Ask the customer whether he/she has any questions.*
- Ask for ideas. *This will aid the sales person in future sales pitches.*



5. Use the customer’s name if possible

Nothing sounds as pleasant or musical to people as their own name. People do not like to be ignored or treated merely as a number. By warmly using the person’s name, you make the contact far more personal.

Approaching the Customer and Creating an Inviting Atmosphere

For us as salespeople, it is at all times necessary for us to speak to our prospects in their own language, this will create a more personal touch to the selling process.

A lot of sales people make the mistake of using technical jargon, thinking that their customers will be so impressed by their technical know-how that they will buy the product. This is not the case. It's not necessary to show customers how clever you are. Worse than this is to show them how little you know. Find a good balance when determining the type of customer you are dealing with.



Avoid Jargon

The average customer does not understand technical jargon, so pitch the level of technical language at the level of understanding of your customer. This is why it is so important to pre-qualify your customer in the approach phase. In this way you will be able to determine the technical level at which you should pitch your presentation.



Avoid Confusion

When we present a range of products we have a choice. We can either give customers the choice of the entire product range or hope they will choose one of them, or we can be more scientific.

We can select a particular product which we think. Through our questioning it is best suited to the customer's needs and design our presentation around that product.



By giving customers too wide a choice we increase the probability of confusion created by trying to compare product A against product B and B against C.

The Approach

1. Name 4 elements to focus on when you approach the customer?

2. Name the 2 most important issues to avoid as part of the language which the salesperson must avoid at all times when they approach customers?

Summary

Practise makes perfect, look for opportunities to practice the following basic elements which we have already covered.

- Approach the customer in the correct way.
- Create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere.



Module 3

Selling Benefits and Overcoming Customer Objections

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module the candidate will be able to:

- 1. Distinguish between a feature, advantage and a benefit.***
- 2. Identify different kinds of objections.***
- 3. Understand and apply ways to overcome objections in a way that is satisfactory to the customer.***

FAB - Features, Advantages and Benefits

Customers don't buy features but rather the benefits that these features afford them. For example, a very high-quality lens on a camera is a feature. The benefit of this feature is good-quality pictures. What customers really buy are high-quality pictures and not high-quality lenses. The lens is only a means to an end.

In understanding the difference between features, advantages and benefits, it is important to realise that a feature is a real, actual, tangible part of the product. Benefits, on the other hand, constitute what that feature can do for the person buying the product. In order to satisfy the needs of your customers, you need to translate the features of any given product into its advantages.

If we look at the basic benefits that people buy, we can see that they fall into five main groups:



- Making money, saving money or avoiding the loss of money
- Saving time
- Convenience, comfort or luxury
- Safety, security or peace of mind
- Prestige and status



Common Complaints

The following are some mistakes that are made by salespeople:

- Running down competitors
- Being too aggressive or abrasive
- Having inadequate knowledge of competitors` products or services
- Having inadequate knowledge of the product he/she is trying to sell



In many cases, the best way to convince prospects of a product's advantage is to demonstrate it. This is particularly true if the product is technically complex. Two rules should be followed in preparing an effective product demonstration. First, the demonstration should be carefully rehearsed to reduce the possibility of even a minor malfunction. Second, the demonstration should be designed to give the customers hands-on experience with the product.



Using Samples

As far as possible we should make use of samples and visual aids. A sample allows customers to handle the product in much the same way that they would if they were to own the product. In this way they could get a feel of what it would be like to use it. Although we may be able to describe the product very adequately, this is not nearly as effective as an actual hands-on demonstration, which allows the customers to become totally involved and experience the product.



OVERCOME CUSTOMER OBJECTIONS

There will ultimately be a stage in the selling process where the customer may have certain objections. It is essential that the sales person knows exactly how to overcome these objections.

An objection is an expression of disapproval. Sales people need to view them as opportunities to complete the sale and not as stumbling blocks that prevent the sale from happening. Customers usually raise objection because they are interested in your product.

The two kinds of objections

There are two types of objections.

Valid objections

A valid objection is often called a condition. And a valid condition is a real, valid reason why the sale cannot go ahead. Typically a valid objection could be no money, no credit or no real need.

For example, if you were to go into a showroom where corporate jets were for sale at a price of two to three million rand, you would certainly object to the price! This would be an absolutely valid objection. There is no way that you have that kind of money or credit facilities to allow this kind of purchase. But if we have qualified our prospects accurately in the approach phase, we should end up with relatively few valid objections at this stage.

Space shortage

Other objections may be that the prospect does not have the space to accommodate the article, or has no access to a power supply. For example, it is irrational to try and sell an electrical stove to someone who lives in a tent. Firstly there would be no space for it and secondly, there wouldn't be a power supply.

In understanding objections we see that a valid objection is one which prevents the sale from going ahead. What do we do when we encounter this type of condition? To start with, we treat this as an objection and try to break it down. If we find that the objection cannot be broken down, it means that we have a valid condition on our hands, which means of course that the sale cannot go on.

There are times when the sales person must realise that the sale is not possible and exit the sales presentation in a friendly way.



Handling objections

Objections could be overcome or handled by following the procedure:

- Make sure you understand the actual objection

- Use techniques such as:
 - ✓ Tactful correction
 - *Always correct the customer in a very discreet manner to minimise the chances of offending the customer*

 - ✓ Partial agreement with the customer
 - *This is closely related to empathising with the customer, whereby the customer agrees with the customer's objection to such an extent that the sales person gains the trust of the customer, therefore believing that the product being sold is in the interest of the customer.*

 - ✓ Sharing the problem
 - *The objection could be solved through partly taking blame for the objection at hand*

 - ✓ Delaying answers
 - *This method will aid you in strategising the best method of promoting the products*

 - ✓ Apologise
 - *When in the wrong, always stay focused and apologise*

✓ Empathy with the customer

- *It is important that you identify with the customer in problems that may arise during the sales pitch*

- Adjust the pitch to the customer's viewpoint
- Obtain the facts and state them openly
- Agree on a course of action
- Take responsibility for action
- Listen attentively
- Question the prospect respectfully

This helps to clarify the objection, shows that you're taking it seriously, gives you more time to consider it fairly and often increases the sales person's chances of obtaining the prospect's agreement. Encourage the prospect to talk by asking such questions as: "Can you explain your reasons for that opinion a little more fully?" Or, "What kind of performance would you expect of a product for your needs?"

- **Agree and counter with new ideas**

This deflects the objection without directly refusing the prospect.

1). The sales person concedes that the objection may well be valid within limited circumstances; and

2) proceed to use the objection as the reason for relating additional benefits of your proposal which outweigh any disadvantages cited.

During the course of the sales pitch, interruptions may be detrimental to the success of the pitch. Guidelines for preventing the interruptions include:

- Sum up briefly before continuing because the prospect may have forgotten the core of the sales pitch

Steps to Overcoming Objections

Overcoming objections is a very simple four-step process:

1. Listen to the objection
2. Question the objection
3. Answer the objection by selling benefits
4. Clarify that it is out of the way

Step 1: Listen

Listen to the objection. You must have heard a sales person interrupting a prospect halfway through his or her objection by saying, "Yes, I know all about it," And then quickly jumping in with an answer.

The first step therefore is to hear the customer out. Not only do customers get irritated when they are interrupted, but also feel that the sales person is a "Smart Aleck" and this doesn't turn them on at all. They may get the feeling that the sales person has heard this objection from many customers and there must therefore be a major problem. It is vitally important that we hear out the objection in full.

Step 2: Question

At this point, throw the ball back into the customer's court. It is important that this be done sincerely and without being argumentative. Under **no** circumstances must the sales person argue with the prospect. If for example the objection is that the item is too bulky, when we question the objection, we must do so in a way that does not start an argument with the customer.

So we feed it back to the prospect like this: "You say this item is too bulky. In what way would you like the weight or the size minimised?" Don't respond with: "What do you mean too bulky". Once we ask customers to elaborate on the objection, they are then forced to verbalise exactly what is troubling them and as they try to explain, they very often answer their own objection.

Practical Examples

Let's look at some practical examples of questioning the objection. A prospect may say that the dining room is too small. You question the objection and feed it back by asking, 'You say that the table is too small. About how much too small do you feel it is?'

The customer then needs to explain how many people will be seated around the table and in the process of actually visualising and explaining the objection, he or she may very well come to the realisation that the table is not too small after all. If on the other hand the table is too small for its intended use, you have a valid objection and you have then to consider a more suitable product. However, if you have accurately qualified the customer in the approach phase, this should not arise. Another example may be a customer who considers the colour of an electric toaster to be too bright. You question the objection as follows: 'You say the colour is too bright. What is the colour scheme of your kitchen that you would like the toaster to blend in with?' Again the customer would have to elaborate on his or her objection to be able to clarify the problem. Once we have questioned the objection and have got the customer to elaborate on it, assuming that this explanation has not answered the customer's own objection, we then get into phase three, which is answering the objection.

Step 3: Answer

The only effective way to answer an objection is to sell the major benefits of the product against the objection. For example, if a customer says that circular saw is too big, we have to answer the customer as follows:

'The reason why this saw is larger than the others you see here is that it has an extra powerful two-kilowatt motor with double insulation and extra strong plastic housing to give the durability which you mentioned was important and also to give the additional power which you indicated you need'. This answers the objection and puts it into perspective with the actual requirements of the prospect.

The key to answering objections is to sell the major benefits of the product against the objection.

Step 4: Clarify

We now have to clarify that the objection is out of the way and we do this by closing the sale. We can do this once we have answered the objection with a statement such as, 'That clears that up entirely, don't you agree'?

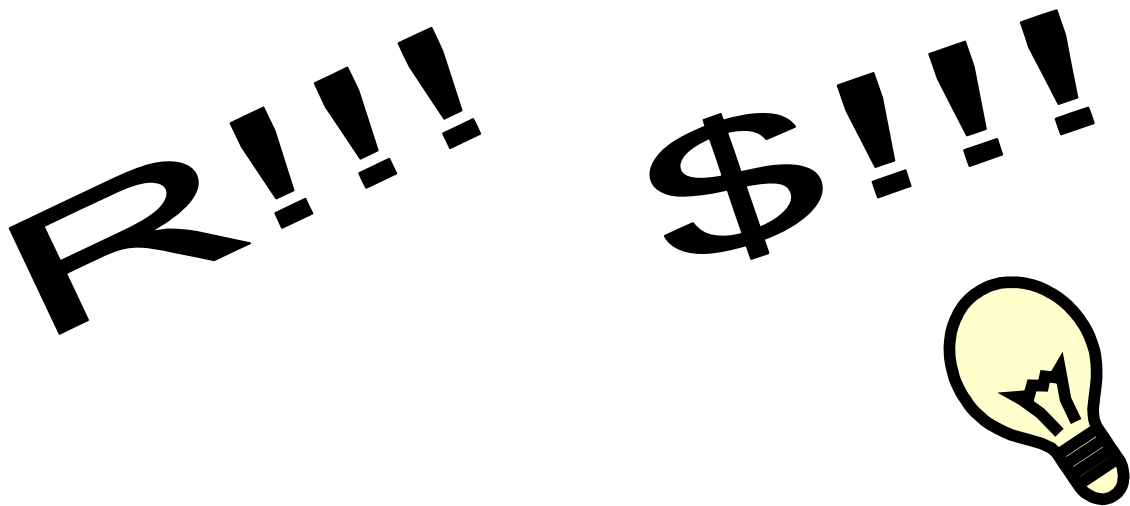
Types of Objections

Price

If your prospect admits it is the price, there are ways to handle that objection. Let's now get to the exciting area of handling price objections.

There are two types of price objections: Firstly, "it is cheaper elsewhere" and secondly, "it is more than I wanted to spend" or it is "too expensive". When faced with 'Its cheaper elsewhere' this must be treated in exactly the same way as any other objection.

If our price is higher than one of our competitors, we need to sell the benefits that the customer will gain by buying from us against the price difference. On the other hand, if we are faced with the objection, 'Yes, in fact, it is a little more than we wanted to spend', or 'I think it's too expensive' we must now, with the help of our customers, rationalise the additional expense. The most effective techniques we can use here is one that is called "*the reduction to the ridiculous*".

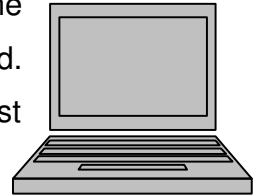


Technique to Solve: 'The Reduction to the Ridiculous'

The first question you have to ask at any time when faced with this price objection is, 'You say this is more than you wanted to spend. Can you tell me to what extent too-much is?' This is going to force your customer to give you an actual amount of money. Without knowing the amount of money involved, we can't handle the objection. So firstly find out how much is too much?

Let's assume that you are talking about a computer of R7, 000.00 and the prospects say that this is about R2000 more than he or she wanted to spend.

The next question is, 'Tell me, how long do you think this computer will last you?' You probably get a time period between three and five years, but



whatever period the customer gives you, don't argue. Let's say for the purpose of our discussion that the customer says four years.

Your next question to the customer is, 'This means, in fact that you'll be paying R500 more per year than you originally planned. Is that correct?' The customer will obviously agree, as the calculation is correct. You then continue with, 'This means in fact that you will be paying a little under R42 per month more than originally planned. Is that correct?' Again the customer will have to agree with you as long as the calculation is correct.

During this exercise it is important to use a writing pad to clearly work out the calculation and also to allow the customer to see how you arrived at your figures. At this point you can turn to your computer and say, 'I wouldn't you agree that to be able to get what is clearly the best computer for your needs that is worth spending just an additional R42 per month?'

At this point, you have taken a price difference of R2000 and reduced it to something reasonably ridiculous in the customer's eyes and at this stage you can ask the obligating question which could be, 'You would like to get the best computer on the market today, wouldn't you?' Once we get agreement on that, you've closed the sale. It is much easier for a prospect to rationalise R42 than it is to rationalise R2000.

“I’d like to think it over”

I’m quite sure that everybody who has been involved in sales has heard the following statements, ‘I’d like to think it over’ and ‘I’d like to sleep on it’. I therefore think that it’s important that we understand that when we are faced with statements of this nature, all this means is that the prospect hasn’t developed sufficient trust in us, our company or our product to go ahead.

It is up to us to smoke out the real objection and most often we find that the real objection is price. These customers force you to come back again and again and again, wasting the most important resources you have and that is time. It is much better to smoke out any real objections that they may have at this point rather than having to keep coming back.

Technique to Solve: The “is-it?” Technique

The way to go about smoking out the objection is with questions. This is called the ‘is it?’ technique. When the prospect says ‘I’d like to think it over’ you need to ask ‘is it’ questions to try to smoke out the objection. For example you could ask, ‘Is it the size of the product? Is it the weight of the product? Is it that you are concerned about getting delivery on time?’

As we go through this ‘is it’ routine we either get confirmations that what we are mentioning are NOT problems, or, better still, we get to what is actually preventing the customer from buying. This technique forces customers to verbalise their reservations and in this way we get to the bottom of the objection.

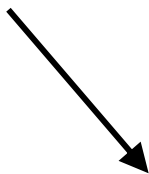
Alternative Products Offered

When faced with an objection where all techniques have been used to convince a prospect to buy a product, the next step would be to offer the customer alternative products that also would satisfy his or her need.

When, for example, a sales person is promoting a single brand and although all efforts have been done in convincing the prospect with no success, the sales person could revert to selling another product that is part of the original product range.

For example, a sales person who is failing to sell washing powder to a customer, as the customer has no need for that particular product at that time, may revert to promoting the Antibacterial hand spray, which is also a product offered in the product basket.

An objection such as: 'I already bought washing powder for this month', could be answered in the following way: 'In that case, why don't you try our Antibac hand spray which provides you and your family with an invisible shield against bacteria. Or, do you have any children's birthdays coming up, we have a fantastic cuddly glow in the dark bear which glows for up to 18 hours with no batteries needed.'



Selling benefits and overcoming objections

Choose at least 4 products that you can sell. Make note of their features. For each feature give a benefit.

Product _____

Feature _____

Benefit _____

Product _____

Feature _____

Benefit _____

Product _____

Feature _____

Benefit _____

Product _____

Feature _____

Benefit _____

1. Name 2 kinds of customer objections?

2. Name the 4 steps to overcoming an objection.

3. Every store sells different products. Name at least 3 typical objections that you have had or could have from customers about the products in your store. Name the product, the objection and then write down how you will overcome this objection.

The Product _____

The Objection _____

How I will overcome?

The Product _____

The Objection _____

How I will overcome?

The Product _____

The Objection _____

How I will overcome?

Summary

When faced with a price objection, you can choose the technique that will best suit the situation. Let us take another look at our attitude towards objections and again I would like to stress: Objections are good. When you reach the point that you can genuinely work with objections and treat them as signposts pointing towards completed sales, you become far more effective as a salesperson.

In the next module you will learn how to best complete or close a sale.

Closing the sale

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this module the candidate will be able to:

- 1. The learner will be able to describe the meaning of closing the sale.***
- 2. The Learner will be able to recognize when and how to close the sale.***
- 3. The learner will be able to apply the techniques in Closing the sale.***

Introduction

Closing refers to obtaining a final agreement whereby the customer decides to buy the product. This is the final, yet most important, aspect of the entire selling process. It is essential that the appropriate questioning techniques are used to aid the sales person in closing the sale. All the sales person's efforts are wasted unless the customer actually buys the product. It is therefore essential that adequate time is allocated.

What is a Close?

A close is the natural ending to a good sales presentation. Let's look at the definition of a sales close. **"A close is a question that we ask that makes our prospects give an answer, which will indicate whether they've bought yet"**. Remember that the whole objective of the encounter with the prospect is to make a sale. It is not to make friends and it's not to practice our product knowledge. The objective of any sales encounter is to get the customer to leave with one of your products.

Sales people in general hate to close a sale because of the **fear of being rejected**. The customer can say 'NO' and therefore sales people do not ask direct closing questions. No closing leads to no sales unfortunately. Rejection must not be taken personally. Customers do not reject the sales person, but the products which they were offered.

When to Close and Identifying Buying Signals

Let's now get on to the question of when to close. Professional sales people should start closing as soon as they start their presentation. Professionals will look for opportunities where the customer indicates agreement and will start closing from the very beginning.

They will be looking for buying signals and as soon as they spot one they will try to close on it. Since buying signals may be verbal or non-verbal, both are good indicators of interest, which means it's time to close. When a customer comes into a store with a request for XYZ product, some sales people actually start demonstrating the product to the customer. I believe that when a customer walks in and says, ' I would like to buy ' then we owe it to the customer to take it off the shelf, wrap it up and write up a cash sale.

If customers say they want it we must first sell it and only then should we demonstrate it, if required, and not the other way around. When customers say they want our product, we must be absolutely sure to give them what they want and not to keep them waiting while we go through an entire product presentation.

There are times when a product will be sold halfway through the presentation. At this point if the customer indicates that he or she is ready to buy, we attempt to close and if they buy, that is the end of the sale. A professional will be looking for opportunities to close right from the **beginning** of the presentation by watching for buying signals.

It is natural to delay making purchase decisions, the longer the time period it takes the sales person to close the sale, the profit to be made from the sale decreases and the risk of losing the sale increases.

Consequently, the sales person's task is to speed up the final decision. Often, this can best be done by simply asking if the customer would buy the product. "Would you like one or two months supply of washing powder? Another closing tactic is to ask the client to choose among two alternative decisions, such as "Would you like the Antibac hand spray or the washing powder?"

Methods that will Aid Sales people in Closing the Sale

- Asking probing questions to establish needs and buying motives
- Use appropriate features, advantages and benefit statements
- Illustrate the presentation with selling aids (products itself)
- Support interest signs with additional benefit statements
- Giving proof, whenever possible
- Uncover and handle any uncertainties
- Look for buying signals (discussed above)

Summary

Sales people can use many different closing techniques. However, it is very important to choose technique that you as a sales person feel comfortable with and which will produce a favourable sales result.

The inability to effectively close a sale is one of the sales killers who is responsible for poor sales results.



Closing the sale

1. What is a sales close?

2. Why do sales people fear closing?

3. When must a sales person close a sale?.

Practical Role Play Exercise

- Choose a friend who has completed the “A-B-C” of Selling Sales Skills programme.
- Select a product which you want to sell from the samples which the facilitator has to offer.
- Decide on the roles each will play first eg who will be the sales person and who to be the customer.
- Prepare a comprehensive, practical and effective role play exercise which will contain all the elements of the “A-B-C” of Selling.
- Practise the role play exercise with your selected partner and practically simulate a typical sales presentation between sales person and customer in front of your facilitator and training colleagues.
- Switch rolls until each partner had a change to practically demonstrate the “A-B-C” of selling.
- Your facilitator will score your presentation as follows.

	<u>Points out of 10</u>
1. Knowledge of how to be prepared for success.	<input type="text"/>
<u>Practically</u>	
2. Approaching the customer.	<input type="text"/>
3. Selling benefits and overcome objections.	<input type="text"/>
4. Closing the sale.	<input type="text"/>
5. Overall impression of success..	<input type="text"/>
Total out of 50	<input type="text"/>
Total %	<input type="text"/>