



Selling Skills Training Course

Courses in:

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1 - Introduction

The main aim of any form of sales training is to increase sales by encouraging salespeople to use new skills and sales techniques that have been proven time after time. A secondary aim is to increase their personal motivation to help them sell more professionally.

By meeting these objectives, we also help to meet a primary aim of any company: Increased Profits. This programme concentrates not on what you should be doing but on exactly how you should do it.

Through development of communication skills and advancement of an existing selling spark, a new sense of enthusiasm and self worth can be created, leading to increased sales and improved motivation levels.



2 - Time Management

To do their job effectively, sales people need to call upon three major resources, all of which should be at their disposal:

- Their own skill and experience
- Their product knowledge
- Time

Of these resources, it can be said that Time is the one which is generally the least considered and the worst managed.

Many sales people complain that they do not have sufficient time. This may be because they have too much to do. It may be because their job is a highly fragmented one, so that they have few opportunities to catch up with tasks that require more thought. Or it may be because they do not organise their work properly.

One of the main aims of examining how you use your time is to enable you to gain periods of discretionary time during which you can do things that are important to you.

Too often we spend our time doing things that are of importance to others. We can also build up chunks of time to enable us to work on tasks that need some thought and concentrated effort, for example, writing reports, analysing prospects, developing plans etc.

Sales people seeking to use their time more efficiently need to ask themselves questions such as:

Am I doing things that really don't have to be done at all - by me or by anyone else?

Am I doing things that really could be handled just as well by someone else?

What do other people do to waste my time? What do I do that wastes their time?

All sales people have a choice: either you can manage your time or you can let your time manage you.



Managing Selling Time

All of us have opportunities to improve the usage of our selling time. We all experience time-related problems. To turn these problems into opportunities we need to understand the reasons for the problems. Then we can develop realistic plans for improving our time usage.

The plan should include some of the following:

- **A Journey Plan**
(Plan the short route around your customers)
- **Read or do paperwork while you wait**
- **A “To do” List**
(Prioritise the items from Must Do Now to Unimportant)
- **Use the 80/20 Rule**
(80% of your work comes from 20% of the business)
- **Rate your customers**
(Spend more time with your A customers and less with the nice C customers)
- **Learn to say no**
(Do your own work and don't help others as much)
- **Delegate**
(Can someone else who has time do that?)



Managing Personal Time

All of us have opportunities to improve the usage of our personal time. We all experience time related problems in our jobs, and in other aspects of our lives and the aim is to find simple solutions to these problems and apply them to the different situations.

Face up to what you are doing compared to what you should be doing!

This plan includes:

- Each day, define clear objectives and stick to them
- Prioritise all tasks - not just the work related ones.
- Manage interruptions and interactions more efficiently
- Write lists
- Use the resources available to you properly
- Avoid procrastination
- Learn to say no when you have to



3 - Territory Management

One of the best ways to organise a sales person's time efficiently is to plan their territory. The main objective of planning this territory is to reduce the amount of time travelling and increase the time spent with clients.

Managing the territory is essential because it:

- Ensures correct coverage of the territory
- Increases sales profitability, through less time spent travelling
- Exposes more sales opportunities with less travel
- Allows for seasonal peaks and troughs

There are a number of different methods one can use in planning a territory but they should all include the following:

- Identify clients (new and existing) whom you wish to visit
- Assign each a call frequency
- Locate clients on a map and colour code, based on call frequency
- Divide area into equal number of calls that can be made in a day
- Group together areas based on calls to be made in a week
- Allow time for prospecting
- Review constantly



4 - Developing a Sales Plan

- Set individual targets - daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly. Review these frequently. If they are not being reached, ask why this is so
- Plan all activities, from phone calls to meetings
- Do not alienate one task from another - build on each one completed - move from A to B to C, not from A to C and back again
- The salesperson should be able to take an overview of the bigger picture of things from time to time and not get bogged down by small problems



5 - Prospecting and Developing New Business

A salesperson's job is the easiest in the world, when things are going well. Orders are flying in, seemingly with minimal amounts of effort on behalf of the salesperson. This is great, while it lasts. But what if the existing customers become saturated with or tired of one particular product? It is then that the salesperson falls back on their bank of prospective clients - if that bank is there.

On average a salesperson will drop 5% - 10% of their best accounts each year. Therefore it is essential to compensate for this attrition by developing new business.

It's a numbers game. Not all leads are hot. And rejection can be a very large player in the game - but by increasing client lists and constant prospecting for that new big player, the rejection can become a side line, rather than a fore runner.

Sorting out Leads

Early detection is the key factor for sorting out prospects.

Before calling determine

- The potential for business
- The chances of receiving payment for your product or service

Do not be too quick to disqualify a prospect. Some may be just seeking information and not ready to buy; the more expensive and complicated the product or service, the more likely this will happen. They may take a little longer to sign, but in this case the patient will strive and get the deal in the end. The impulsive salesperson might not remember the enquiry, but the potential customer will return to where they were valued and treated with respect.

The most common lead comes from customer enquiries via the telephone, post, a third person or a show room visit.



Here, the most important key to converting an inquiry into a sale is a quick follow up. Most people will make several inquiries before deciding on a supplier - and the early bird catches the worm!

Calls must be returned, information sent out and appointments arranged - before the opposition has time to do the same thing.

Leads are everywhere - it is just necessary to know how to spot them

Personal observations:

Read newspapers, trade magazines, directories etc.

Be alert for possible new business, e.g. a company advertising how well it is doing is a likely prospect. The same goes for advertisements, planning applications (expanding companies), announcements regarding new companies etc

Existing Clients:

Examine customer files for companies who have not purchased anything for a year or more and who were satisfied with your product. These clients could be either a source for new business or could at least be a source for referrals.

Cold canvassing:

Cold canvassing is a daunting task, but will always produce new prospects. They help to spread the name and nature of your company and familiarise prospective customers with what is available on the market. Even if the outcome seems negative every call has its benefits.



6 - Making Appointments by Telephone

When trying to make an appointment, the objective is to get the appointment and not to conduct the sale. Do not give away too much information or the prospect will have a pre-emptive chance to turn down the meeting.

Naturally the prospect will insist on some information before granting an appointment. A balance must be reached between giving enough information to create an interest and leaving a substantial amount to the imagination of the prospect.

The trick is when giving each new piece of information to the prospect try to end by offering a choice of times or dates for an appointment. This will cause the prospect to focus away from the sale and onto the minor point of setting up an appointment date/time.

In order to keep control of the conversation plus get the appointment, use a word for word script, as this will allow instant replies to the many objections that will be offered in most cases.

Handle objections as quickly as possible and then divert the prospect away from the product and back onto the details of the appointment.

e.g.

Prospect: *"I'm not interested at the moment"*

Salesperson: *"I can understand how you would not be interested in something that you have not seen, or know very little about - but so as you can judge for yourself, would you be free at.."*



7 - Call Objectives

In setting objectives, make sure that they are practical. If they are too high, you will subconsciously give up before you try. If they are too low, they will offer you no challenge. They must be specific, quantifiable and measurable.

The sales persons' main objective of each call or meeting should be to:

- 1 - Get the Attention**
- 2 - Gain interest**
- 3 - Create desire**
- 4 - Then take action**

To do this, just a few pointers should be taken into consideration:

- People always want, it is a natural instinct. The job of the sales person is to ensure that the prospect wants whatever they are selling.
- When the "want" has been established, it must then be converted into a justifiable "need". A prospect will only buy if they can justify their purchase.
- When a prospect wants something enough, they will then begin to need it, and to rationalise this necessity. The desire is now created and will be satisfied with a purchase.
- The salesperson can now complete their objective and take action, by closing the sale!



8 - Establishing Customer Needs

The first objective in selling is to establish the customer's needs and their criteria for buying. • Having found out exactly what the customer wants, the salesperson can then successfully sell it back to them. The only way to thoroughly establish customer needs is through **fact-finding**.

Fact-finding is achieved through questioning.

This is a major part of any presentation. The salesperson should ask the questions, without providing any of the solutions. The questions should not stop until all of the customer's needs have been uncovered.

Having asked these questions, the salesperson must remember to LISTEN to the answers. Listening is only really possible when the next question is known - planned questions enhance the ability to listen.

People will always buy quicker if they think that it was their idea in the first place. By establishing their needs the salesperson is also developing a rapport with the customer. This is very important to strengthen the relationship between the two companies and will help future sales.



9 - Making Effective Presentations

The sales presentation is a sales meeting. Like any meeting, it must be planned and structured to achieve the desired result.

The structure of the presentation is as follows:

- 1 - **Opening**
The opening should set the scene
It should create a climate where it is comfortable for the customer to answer questions.
- 2 - **Fact find**
The salesperson should proceed by determining the customer's needs.
- 3 - **Presenting benefits**
The salesperson should now present aspects of the product which reflect the customer's needs in a language which is relevant
- 4 - **Handling concerns**
The salesperson should present answers to anticipated questions in a manner which does not confront the customer.
- 5 - **Closing the sale**
The salesperson should take control by concluding the meeting and asking for the order.

A planned approach gives the salesperson confidence and improves the probability of success.



10 - Selling Benefits

At this stage the sales person should start to sell. They have successfully arranged an appointment with the right person, have a clear objective of what they want to achieve from the meeting, have established the customer's needs and requirements and are confident and prepared to present the benefits of their product or service to that customer.

The benefits of the product should always be the main selling point, rather than its features. The clearer the benefits are presented, the more successful the meeting will be. The customer's main interest is in how this product will benefit them.

A feature alone tells the customer very little about the whole product, unless they are very familiar with it. There are many features which have benefits, but may be viewed by some customers as negatives, e.g. a house with a very large garden.

Positive - Great for a large family

Negative - Bad for someone who hates gardening

The benefits associated with the product should satisfy the need of the customer - by making life in some way better, easier, more efficient, or even just that little bit more pleasant.



11 - Handling Objections

In selling, objections are expected and anticipated. In practice, salespeople often make a token effort to answer objections, and then give up. However, objections can be seen as a positive element rather than something to dread. The smoothest way to answer an objection is to have a prepared answer ready.

There are rarely more than a dozen objections, associated with one particular product, that will be offered time and time again. Therefore with careful planning and anticipation an answer should not be too difficult to have ready.

Objections **do** need more planning, preparation and practice than any other part of the selling process, but their successful manipulation can also be the most efficient way of leading to a close.

Objections can be divided into two categories. These are :

1 - Hidden Objections

Here the prospect does not wish to state his real objection but instead presents an excuse, e.g. *"Talk to me about it some other time"*

The salesperson's goal is to discover the real objection/
This is achieved by further probing, e.g. *" Obviously you have a reason for saying that - do you mind if I ask you what it is?"*

2 - Questions

More often than not, objections are **unanswered questions** in the prospect's mind. When selling, the salesperson is asking someone to make decisions. People, when making decisions, ask questions.



Objections which are questions should be handled using a simple four step procedure:

- 1 - Listen, don't interrupt
- 2 - Make a softening statement
- 3 - Turn the objection into a question
- 4 - Answer with reference to benefits

e.g.

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Step 1 | Objection
<i>"Talk to me about it some other time"</i> |
| Step 2 | Softening Statement
<i>"I understand how you feel, in fact other customers have said the same to me, and I can really appreciate how busy you are"</i> |
| Step 3 | Rephrase as a question
<i>"However, I'm sure that you are wondering about what the benefits would be to you, just like everyone else"</i> |
| Step 4 | Refer to benefits
<i>"One of the reasons that I would like to speak to you today is.."</i> |

Pre-empting Objections:

Objections may also be handled by pre-empting. The salesperson can choose to bring the objection up as part of the presentation. There are direct advantages to this technique:

- It clears the air, making it more likely that the customer will listen to the presentation.
- As the customer has not brought up the objection they are less likely to defend it.



12 - Closing the Sale

REMEMBER: "IF YOU DON'T CLOSE THE SALE THEN YOU ARE WORKING FOR THE OPPOSITION"

-TACK 1950

Many salespeople believe that if they are equipped with closing techniques, they will lure the unsuspecting to buy. This is far from the truth.

In reality, a salesperson who moves through the opening, fact-finding and presentation stages with professionalism, will automatically close. There is no particular secret to closing, but if there is a technique it is to ask - the more you ask for - the more you will get.

Very often the salesperson does not close the sale because they do not ask. They fear asking, they do not want to feel pushy, they believe the longer they leave it, the easier it will become. Closing techniques represent ways of asking for the order in a subtle way.

There are two types of closes - the **Trial Close** and the **Real Close**

The Trial Close

The trail close is a qualification step. Here the salesperson's objective is not to close, but to see how near or far the customer is from the real close. The salesperson uses the same techniques but prefaces with a question.

e.g: "*In your opinion do you feel ...*"

The trial close is an opinion seeking question. Depending on the prospect's reply the salesperson may proceed to a close.



The Real Close

While the trial close is an opinion seeking question, the salesperson should only ask for a final decision when the buying signals are positive.

Closing Techniques

1 Suggestion Close

When the buyer needs a little general persuasion.

"May I suggest that we get the paper work out of the way so that we can progress this further?"

2 Assumptive Close

Here the assumption is that the buyer has made their decision to proceed.

"That seems to be everything. When would you like to start the process?"

3 Alternative Close

Here an alternative is offered, either which will close the sale.

"Would you be paying by invoice or by instalments?"

Now that the order has been obtained, the salesperson should not show any emotion other than to congratulate the customer on their good decision. It is a great feeling to finally close a deal but until the salesperson has left the customer they should remain business like and formal.

The prospect has now become a client and must now be serviced in the best possible way that the company can, in order to maintain the relationship and ensure future business.

