

Personal Selling Skills

**How to profit from improved
selling techniques**

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Section 1

Introduction

This Business Skills workbook has been designed to improve your selling skills by:

- helping you to recognise selling opportunities
- coaching you in successful techniques.

You will be able to increase sales through:

- a greater understanding of why people buy
- greater persuasiveness
- more confidence in using successful selling techniques.

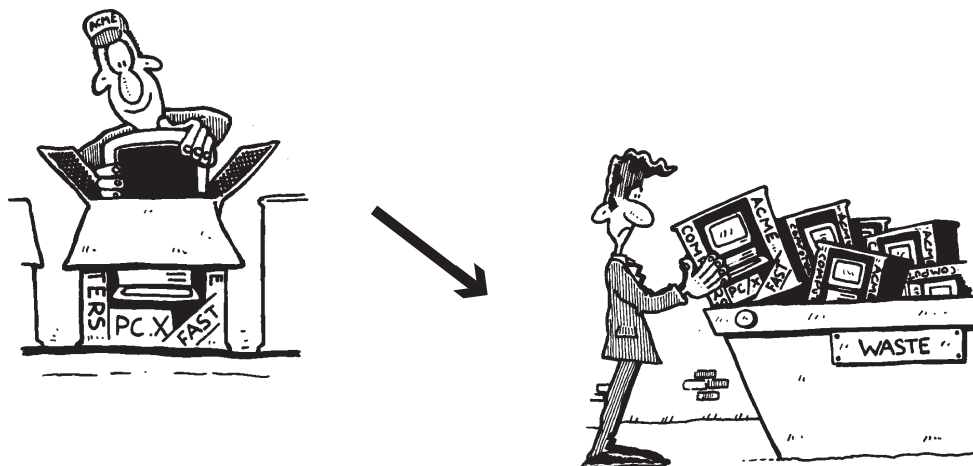
An American Corporation has a sign inside its main entrance. The sign simply states:

“If everyone’s gonna eat, sure as hell someone’s gotta sell”.

John Fenton says . . . **production - sales = scrap!**

The message is that, regardless of the thoroughness of your market research, the excellence of your product or service and the efficiency of your operations, if you don’t make sales, you don’t have a business!

Some people find this aspect of their business frightening - a mental stumbling block.



Exercise 1 How do you feel about selling and salespeople?



Have a look at the following list. Do you think the statements are true or false?

	Your Response	Correct Answer
Salespeople are born with a natural ability to sell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The 'gift of the gab' is needed to get people to buy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shy people never succeed in the sales world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good salespeople tell what they have to offer and ask for the order	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salespeople carefully explain why you need their products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good salespeople can sell almost anything to anybody	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check your answer with page 71.

Section 2

What is Selling?

Selling has been called the ‘best paid hard work and the worst paid easy work’. The ‘hard work’ is contacting lots of potential customers so you can help them. It requires motivation.

Selling is about ‘helping people to recognise what they want, and then helping them to have it’. Only through helping people can you sell to your customers.

It needs many skills but, especially, enthusiasm. The customer catches your enthusiasm and buys your product. You also need the ability to listen so you find out what they really want.

Selling isn’t about manipulating people. This would produce a ‘win:lose’ result. It’s about motivating people to have things that will make them happier. It’s about ‘win:win’.

In the typical fish and chip shop, the queue of people already know what they want. The staff make no attempt to sell anything extra - they just order-take.

People won’t buy from you unless they:

- want it
- want it (badly) from you.

So:

- Find out what they want
- Sell matching benefits which get them to realise how badly they want your product or service (want not need).



Section 3

Don't Just Order-Take

Exercise 2 Question

How much did you sell her?

A lady walks into your fruit and vegetable shop and says, "5 lbs of potatoes, please". You smile, discuss the weather and serve her with 5 lbs of potatoes. How much did you sell her?

**Answer**

How much did you sell her? Nothing.

Oh yes, she bought. But you didn't *sell* her anything. She bought 5 lbs of potatoes from habit, the window display, an advertisement or a friend's recommendation. You just took the order.

That's a commonplace skill and is poorly paid. Unless you ask, how will you know whether she would have been happier with 10 lbs?

Try again.

A lady walks into your fruit and vegetable shop and says "5 lbs of potatoes, please". You say, "We've a special delivery of fresh crop Jerseys today; they're lovely with a salad". She says, "Oh, in that case, give me 10 lbs and a lettuce and some tomatoes". How much did you sell her?

That's right - 5 lbs extra of potatoes and the lettuce and the tomatoes. Now that isn't a commonplace skill. It's rarity makes it worth a fortune. It usually earns one.

Section 4

The Building Blocks That Lead to a Sale

3 Sell Results

Explain how the customer will benefit. Not cosmetics . . . but confidence. Not the latest in computer software . . . but time saved or better control of the business.

2 Sell by Asking Not Telling

Asking questions keeps you in control. Asking questions helps you find out what they want.

1 Sell Yourself First

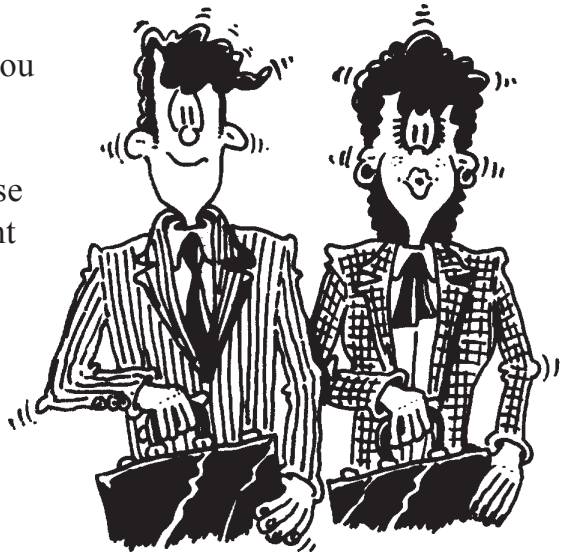
By taking an interest in them. People buy people first . . . products or services later. Make them think, "This person acts and thinks like I do". When you've got a customer, give them great service and never forget them. And never let them forget you.

1 Sell Yourself First

How You Look

Think how you should look and act before you actually begin selling.

The easy way to find the answer is to reverse things. Look at it from your customers' point of view. If you were in the market for the product or service that you provide, what would you expect?



Exercise 3 How you look



Put yourself in the customer's shoes. If you were a customer, how would you expect the seller to be dressed?

Check your answer with page 72.

The Right Attitude

To succeed in selling, you need a combination of:

- product knowledge
- selling skills
- the right attitude.

How important do you feel these three factors are relative to each other? Is *your* success mainly due to product knowledge? Or to selling skills? Or to attitude?

Exercise 4 The Right Attitude

How much of your selling success depends on attitude - 15%? 35%? 50%?
Put your opinion in the box below.

Your opinion %

Check your opinion against that of an American survey on page 72.

Attitude is more important than ability.

This does not mean that product knowledge and selling skills are unimportant. They are vitally important. However, in order to get the best results, you have to think right. You need a positive mental attitude.

What Makes a Seller More Successful?

Here are ten factors that make salespeople more successful:

- Enthusiasm
- Ability to close the sale
- Product knowledge
- Looks after the customer
- Plans use of time well
- Good listener
- Answers objections better
- Makes a good first impression
- Good talker
- Has better contacts.

Exercise 5 Which do you think buyers believe to be the most important?



Check your answer with page 72.

Exercise 6 Which three factors are you *best* at?



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Exercise 7 Which three factors are you *least confident* about?



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Exercise 8 So, to produce the biggest improvement in your ability, which should you work hardest at?



- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Check your answer with page 72.

2 Sell by Asking Not Telling

Why? Well, who knows more about the customer's needs - you or them?

Ask questions. Listen.

- It avoids mistakes and arguments
- It helps you discover what will motivate them to buy
- You control the conversation
- They feel important
- And they are talking about a topic that they find fascinating. What is it?



Sell by asking not telling

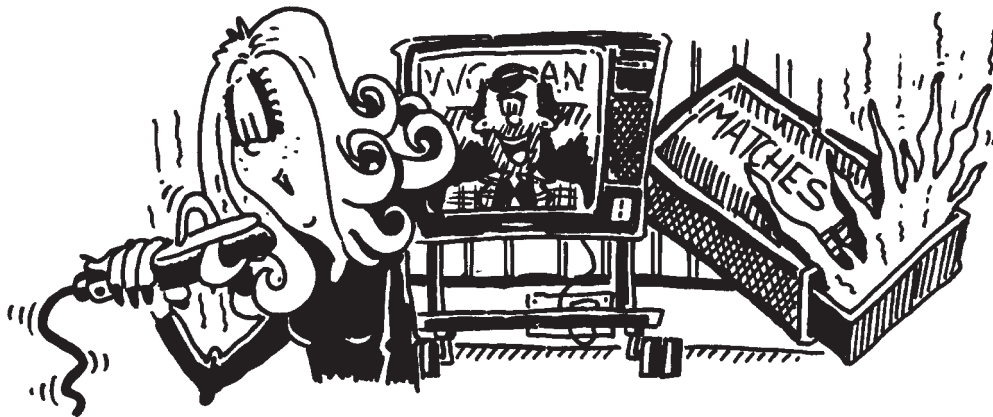
3 Sell Results

People do not buy things.

People buy what things *do* for them.

This is an absolutely vital point and, without a total understanding of it, you will not make many sales!

- People don't buy boxes of matches, they buy a box of flames, ie *what matches do for them, not what they are.*
- People don't buy make-up or curling tongs, they buy confidence, ie *what things do for them, not what they are.*
- People don't buy a box with a cathode ray tube in it, they buy entertainment, ie *what a television does for them, not what it is.*



People buy results - what they get out of it - what it does for them - not what it is.

What does your product or service *do* for people?

To find out, use the 'which means that' test.

Exercise 9

Take 5 minutes to list some of the features and benefits of your service/product/firm



Feature	... which means that ...	Benefit

People buy benefits! Sell Results!

Section 5

How to Handle Incoming Calls

Exercise 10 Why might people be calling you?

Check your answer with page 73.

Here are two questions to consider.

- What happens when you meet someone face to face?
- What do you say when you answer the telephone?

Tackle Exercises 11a and 11b.

Exercise 11a What happens during the first 30 seconds of a face to face meeting?

Check your answer with page 73.

Exercise 11b What is the difference between the way people answer the phone and the way they meet someone face to face?

Check your answer with page 73.

GATE is a simple mnemonic that will help you remember the correct procedure for answering telephone calls. Here it is in detail.

Greet

- The first things to say when you answer the telephone.

Exercise 12 How will you greet incoming callers?
Write the script in this box.



Check your answer with page 73.

Ask questions.

Ask - the callers name. Write it down and use it. Check the spelling. Don't say, "What is your name?" or "Who are you?" but "May I have your name please?" or "And is that Ms? Mrs . . .?).

Ask - the purpose of the call. Get full details. Write them down.

Do - ask open questions (keep control)
- be patient
- show you are listening
- be interested
- 'mirror' their speech
- be clear and concise
- volunteer any useful information.

Don't - interrupt the caller
- be impatient or rude
- use superfluous phrases ("You know" etc).

Tell them what you are going to do.

- Eg:**
- hold
 - put through
 - call back
 - give information
 - offer help and options where pertinent.

- Do**
- pass on the caller's name and nature of their enquiry *before* putting them through to an extension
 - tell callers why you are asking them to hold
 - tell callers who you are putting them through to and why
 - above all, say what you can do - not what you can't do.

Don't (*unless unavoidable*)

- put calls straight through to extensions. Check the person's availability first
- ask the caller to call back later. You call them back. Set, check or agree your company policy on this
- commit other people unless you have authority
- shout to colleagues across the room when on the telephone
- make derogatory comments about other departments or staff
- use bad language
- make judgements.

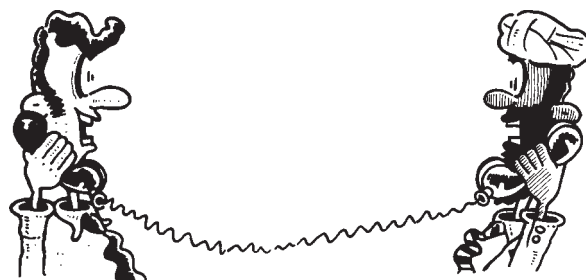
End the conversation.

Summarise what you have agreed, thank the caller and ring off.

Try and ensure that you put the receiver down last.



Reminder: You are treated by people on the telephone in the same way that you treat them! Behaviour breeds behaviour.



How to Handle Complaints

Use this six step sequence for handling complaints made by telephone.

- 1 Listen** Hear them out. The most angry complainant will run out of steam eventually as long as you do not try to interrupt and argue.
- 2 Empathise** But do not agree. The complaint may not be valid. Understand that the caller believes he/she has grounds for complaint. Say, "I can understand how you feel".
- 3 Thank** Thank them for bringing the matter to your attention.
- 4 Question** Ask open questions in order to obtain full, detailed information of the grievance. Do not comment other than to express understanding and do be patient - *no* interruptions.
- 5 Tell** Tell the caller what you are going to do. (See notes under 'T' of GATE).
- 6 Report Back** If the complainant is not satisfied during this first call, report back to them with an answer to the complaint.

Note. If the complaint is valid, offer your sincere apologies and put the matter right. If the complaint is not valid, understand the complainant's views and endorse their right to hold them. Then say, "However, in actual fact . . ." and explain the situation.



Reminder: Reverse the situation. Ask yourself how you would feel if the situation was reversed.

General Points on Using the Telephone

- Smile.
- Talk to a person *through* the telephone. Don't talk *to* the telephone.
- Be consistent but not parrot like.
- Remember each caller is 'new'.
- Always make notes of what they say and what you need to do.
- Confirm messages given or taken in writing.
- Use hand movements, be natural. It helps.
- Remember, we all like to deal with pleasant people.

Answering Machines

Many people do not like leaving messages on them. The reason is that, confronted with an unexpected machine, some people become tongue-tied, unsure of what to say and they put the phone down. But an answering machine does avoid the annoyance felt when a caller makes several, unanswered calls.

So, leave a clear concise message covering the following.

- Say who you are and thank them for calling.
- Say that you are not able to answer the telephone at the moment. (Do not say you are out or when you will be back, for security reasons).
- Give any other point of contact.
- Tell them what to do. Say "Please don't hang up. Just leave your name and telephone number and we'll get back to you as soon as possible."



Section 6

How to Make Appointments by Phone

There are three ways of using the phone to arrange appointments:

- 1 Cold call - your call is totally unsolicited
- 2 Mail out - you telephone to follow up a mail out
- 3 Mixture - you use a mixture of the first two methods.

Exercise 13 Question

Consider this situation. A prospective customer is seated at her desk and receives:

- a telephone call, *or*
- a mail out from you, *or*
- is told that you are in reception requesting an interview.

What does she think?

What would you think if the situation was reversed?

Answer

It is unfortunate that years of direct telephone calls and mail shots, done badly, have created an adverse response. The likely reaction, therefore, is “Oh no, not another one”. “I’m not interested.”

Your method of contacting prospective clients (and breaking down this prejudice) must be very professional and you must be honest.

Your product or service is excellent, isn't it? If not, your organisation would alter it! Businesses with a need for your type of services should know what you have to offer. It is your job to tell them.



Reminder: *We are all happy with what we have - until we see something that is better.*

Whichever method of contact you use, first define your objectives. Your objectives are what you set your stall out to achieve.

In addition to your objective, you must also have a 'fall back'. Psychologically, this is important because initial calls are very much a 'numbers game'. Successful calls are easy to accept, unsuccessful ones are not! A 'fall back' objective should enable you to feel like a winner on every call. For example, suppose the initial result you get is "No, not interested". As a consequence, you've not achieved your objective. So, you move on to your 'fall back' position. You say: "I understand you are not interested at the moment. May I call you back in . . . (six months, a year or whatever)?"

You, therefore, close on a positive note instead of a negative one.

Let's see how to make appointments using each of our three scenarios.



1 Cold Call

Who to call? Decide who will benefit most from your service/product. Aim high.

Ask their switchboard operator for the first name and surname of that person. Add it to your list.

Phone and get through.

Use a script along the lines explained below.

Your Selling Script

The aim is not to read from it and sound like a parrot but to reap these advantages:

- It will enable you to know what does and what doesn't work. Without a script, you may not remember why your call was (or wasn't) successful.
- It will ensure that you remember all pertinent details.
- You'll remember where you got to if you get sidetracked.

Your script and, therefore, your telephone conversation should be kept as brief as possible.

Write a script, try it and, if it works, shorten it. If it still works, shorten it again. When it ceases to work, go back to the one before.

By doing this, you will have made sure that you make the most efficient use of your time.



Reminder - The shorter the script (that works), the more calls you will be able to make in a given time.

More calls = More appointments = More sales

The **IBROC** technique is a simple, proven way to generate a script for making appointments by telephone. IBROC stands for:

- I** Introduction - introduce yourself and your company
- B** Benefit - explain what's in it for them
- R** Relax - relax them by taking the 'sell' out of it
- O** Option - give them alternative times
- C** Confirm - confirm the appointment and ring off!

Example

Here's an example of a cold call script for a firm selling motor parts.

Objective? To arrange an appointment.

Fallback? To obtain permission to call at a later date or send some literature.

☐ **Introduction** "Good morning, Mr Smith. My name is Alan Jones from Bitz and Partz. Are you aware of our services, Mr Smith?"

☐ **Benefit** "We pride ourselves on providing the very best delivery service of motor parts in the UK. Our customers enjoy a guaranteed and worry free service."

☐ **Relax** "Of course, I have no idea whether or not we can help you at the moment. I'm calling today simply to fix a time to explain the sort of service that we can offer you."

☐ **Option** "Are you available for a few minutes at ten to nine on Tuesday, 3 October or would sometime that afternoon suit you better?"


☐ **Confirm** "That's fine, Mr Smith. I look forward to meeting you on Tuesday, 3 October at ten to nine. Thank you. Goodbye."

Notes to the Script

Introduction	Note the use of statement - question technique. It works!
Benefit	People want to know ‘what's in it for them’. Tell them some good news.
Relax	Remember, we simply want to fix a time to go and tell them about something that we feel will benefit them. The attitude is that you are calling to fix a time for an appointment rather than calling in personally without an appointment.
Option	If this is used properly and in a matter-of-fact way, your prospective customer will think “Which is the best time for me?” rather than “Shall I see this person or not?”.
Confirm	Having obtained agreement to an appointment time, ring off as soon as possible. If you don’t, you may be asked questions and impart just enough information for your prospective customer to decide that they don’t want to see you after all.

Exercise 14

Your Telephone Script



Objective?

Fall Back?

Introduction

.....

.....

.....

.....

Continued

Benefit

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Relax

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Option

.....

.....

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.....

.....

Confirm

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2 Mail Out

You have mailed out some information to a prospective customer, now you need to follow up by making a telephone call.

Example - How to follow up a mail out

Objective? To arrange an appointment with the buyer.

Fall Back? Permission to keep in touch.

Use the IBROC sequence

□ **Introduction** “Good morning, Mr Smith. Alan Jones here from Bitz and Partz. I sent you some information about our services last week. Did it arrive OK?”

(If yes) “Oh good, then you know something about us now, Mr Smith. As you will have read . . .”

(If no) “Oh dear, it is on the way, Mr Smith. It will tell you how...”

□ **Benefit** “. . . we offer a parts delivery service, tailored to meet specific needs, which is guaranteed and worry free.”

□ **Relax** “Whether or not we can be of help to you at the moment, I don’t know but I’m calling to fix a time to spend a few minutes with you to go into a little more detail for possible future interest.”

□ **Option** “Can you spare a few minutes next Tuesday at ten to nine or would sometime in the afternoon suit you better?”

□ **Confirm** “That’s fine, Mr Smith. I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, 3 October at ten to nine. Thank you. Goodbye.”

3 Mixture

This is so called because it incorporates points from both the other methods. Here's how it works.

When you telephone your target company, get the information you require and ask if you can send some information. At this stage, some people swear that they are more successful by saying that they are "not selling anything".

Then you mail a letter and leaflet. A few days later, you telephone the company again to check that the information has been received and you request an appointment.

Let's look at that in more detail. The following example shows how to do a phone-mail - phone mixture.

Example - Stage 1: Cold call to gather information and set the scene

"Good morning. My name is Alan Jones from Bitz and Partz. You will be pleased to know that I'm not selling anything. I'm actually calling to ask for help."

"I'm sending some literature to your company - it is to do with our special motor parts service - and, obviously, it is important that I address it correctly. Could you help me please with the name of the person I should send the information to?"

"Mr T Smith. Thank you very much."

"Who am I speaking to?"

"Well, thank you again, Angela."

"Another reason for ringing is to try and stop my literature being filed in that small round file at the side of your desk. You won't put it in there, will you?"

"Good. I'll ring back in a few days to check if there is any other information Mr Smith needs. Would you be good enough to tell Mr Smith that I am sending the information to him?"

"Thank you for your help. Goodbye."

Example - Stage 2: Mail Out

Probably send a brochure and a letter. The letter might say the following.

Dear Mr Smith

Here's the information I promised

I enclose some details about our motor parts services. As you see, these are tailored to suit your individual requirements.

We work hard at providing our clients with, what we believe, is the best possible service in our industry.

Perhaps we might have the opportunity of proving to you that we are as good as we say?

I will telephone you at the end of the week to arrange for a few minutes chat when I will be able to give you more details.

Yours sincerely

PS You get peace of mind with our service - we guarantee it!

Example - Stage 3: Follow up phone call to get an appointment

"Good morning. Is that Angela? It's Alan Jones here from Bitz and Partz. Remember we spoke a few days ago? I did promise to call Mr Smith to arrange a time for an appointment. Can you put me through please?"

"Hello Mr Smith . . .". Use the same script for the follow up to a mail out which we covered earlier.

Note - the positive follow up. In our example, Angela is our ally. There is every chance that you will be put straight through to Mr Smith.

Objections When Making Appointments

You will be faced with objections when making calls to arrange appointments. One solution is to 'sidestep' the objection and move straight to a closing question, ie one that will win you an appointment. You must, of course, acknowledge the objection but that is all.

Example - Some examples featuring the sidestep technique:		
Objection	Sidestep	Closing Question
No need at present.	That's probably correct, Mr Jones. But there are some special benefits which you will find interesting and, probably, useful.	Can you make a few minutes on Monday at ten to ten or would sometime in the afternoon suit you better?
Can you give me more details?	Certainly, I can but I will need more information in order to do that.	Can you make a few minutes on Monday at ten to ten or would sometime in the afternoon suit you better?
Too busy	I can sympathise with that, Mr Jones. That's why I always telephone first for an appointment.	Can you make a few minutes on Monday at ten to ten or would sometime in the afternoon suit you better?
Send some literature	I would send information, Mr Jones, but situations are individual. I will deliver them to you if I could just have a brief chat so that I can be sure I'm leaving you the right thing.	Can you make a few minutes on Monday at ten to ten or would sometime in the afternoon suit you better?
I don't want to waste your time.	Thank you for that, Mr Jones, but don't worry. It's my job to let you know how we might be able to help you.	Can you make a few minutes on Monday at ten to ten or would sometime in the afternoon suit you better?

Exercise 15

Here is an exercise you can use to practise telephone appointment making. You will need a friend or colleague to help you. Sit back to back.

- One of you will play the part of the seller. The other will play the part of the receptionist/secretary/assistant and the buyer.
- At first, neither the receptionist/secretary/assistant nor buyer should make things too difficult for the seller.
- Now swap roles.
- Repeat but make it progressively more difficult for the seller.



Section 7

How to Reach the Decision Maker

In between you and the decision maker are probably one or more ‘buffers’ - assistants or secretaries. Their job is partly to protect the decision maker from having to talk to you. So, you need a strategy to get past the ‘buffers’.

Stage 1 Phone ‘Buffer Number 1’

Ask for help. Get them on your side.

Check if there is another ‘buffer’.

“Good, this is from I wonder if you would help me please?”

“Thank you. What’s your name please? Well, David, my organisation supplies (or) I understand/know/believe that your company uses I am going to talk to your company about the possibility of us doing some business together but, to be honest, I don’t have enough information. This is where you can help me if you would. Tell me, David, what?”

Exercise 16 What information would you need for your business?



Ask if you can speak to someone else; maybe the user.

Stage 2 Phone Again and Deal with ‘Buffer Number 2’

Armed with the information gained from your ‘ally’ (which is what they should now be), you call back. In a number of cases, you may be passed to another ‘buffer’, although, very often, your ‘ally’ will introduce you straight to the decision maker.

Sometimes, you are going to come up against a ‘buffer’ who will not be on your side!

Their job in life, or so it seems, is to stop you talking to their boss.

Always remember this. Do not sell your product or service to the ‘buffer’. Instead, sell them the importance of you talking to their boss. This is often achieved by intimating a possible gain or loss to their company.

For instance, you stand a good chance of getting past the ‘buffer’ if you say that you want to talk to their boss to explain how a saving of 15% of costs is usually achieved by companies using your services.

Exercise 17 What will you say to get past the ‘buffer’?



Exercise 18 Maybe you could call at a time that the decision maker will be in the office alone. When would that be?



Section 8

The Sales Presentation

We have already laid down some ground rules.

You look the part and you are thinking in the correct, positive way. You realise that people buy what things do, not what they are.

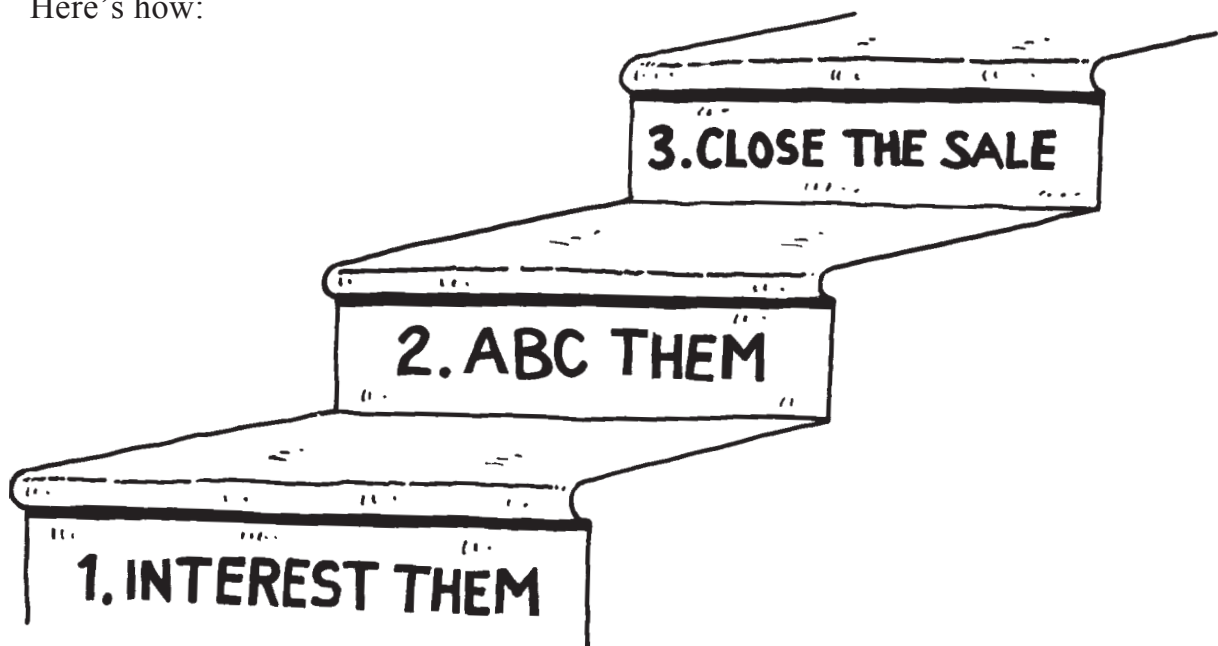
Let's see how to build a sales presentation.

In your sales presentation, use the **KISS** principle - **K**eeP **I**t **S**hort and **S**imple.

Selling is simple yet it seems that so many salespeople, and so many sales trainers, need to complicate it.

A good sales presentation should be a conversation. That doesn't mean sellers telling people about what they have to offer and then asking them if they want to buy. It means sellers finding out what people want and then showing them how to get it.

Here's how:



Three simple steps. You say something or show something in order to raise sufficient interest for your prospective clients to listen to you. You then find out what they want and explain how you can help them achieve it. This then leads naturally to the final step where you ‘close the sale’.

Step 1 Interest Them

“The only way to get anyone to do anything is to make them want to.”

You need to make your prospective clients *want* to answer your questions. So, sell yourself . . . by taking an interest in them. Win their confidence. Sell the interview before you sell the product or service.

If you’re approaching them for the first time, offer a general benefit - one that will make them think “This might be interesting”. For example:

“Would you like to save some of the time you spend on your paperwork?”
... is better than ... “Can I interest you in a computer?”



A good way of getting people to want to talk to you is the ‘**Statement - Question**’ technique. The statement should incorporate a general benefit. Here are some examples:

Example - Imagine you install computer systems. Your prospective client is an office manager . . .

You say: "Mr Smith, my company supplies office computer systems. We have been able to save companies such as yours around 15% of their operating costs." (Statement)
 "I imagine this is a saving you would like to make?" (Question)

He says: "Well yes, but I don't think you can help me."

You say: "Obviously, I don't know if I can, Mr Smith." (Statement)
 "But, to find out, may I ask you a few simple questions?" (Question)

Example - Imagine you sell advertising space for a magazine. Your prospective client is a plumber . . .

You say: "Mr Jones, I am responsible for helping businesses such as yours gain more customers." (Statement)
 "That is of interest, isn't it?" (Question)

He says: "Yes."

You say: "I don't know whether or not I can help you, Mr Jones." (Statement)
 "So, may I ask you a few straightforward questions to find out?" (Question)

Exercise 19

Write some examples of *Statement-Questions* relating to your business that will arouse interest in your potential customers.



Step 2 ABC Your Potential Customers

ABC - it's as easy as that!

You need to practise this ABC of creating desire so that it becomes second nature to you.

It is A **A**sk
B **B**argain
C **C**orrespond

Let's look at it in detail.

Ask

Find out what people want and then show them how to get it. If you do that, you'll produce a 'win:win' result, ie you will make a sale and have a happy client.

How do you find out what people want?

It's simple. You ask!

You ask to discover their 'Motivating Key'.

Behind every purchase there is a Motivating Key. This is either a single thing or a combination of things which motivates the buyer to buy.

For instance:



Imagine that a woman has a red dress and a red handbag and wants to complete her outfit with a pair of red shoes.

The woman walks into a shoe shop and the assistant tries very hard to sell her a pair of blue shoes that are on special offer.



In that example, there would be little or no chance of a sale being made, no matter how good the shoes, because the Motivating Key in that case was the colour - red, to match the rest of her outfit.

So, you must probe. You must ask questions and listen carefully to the answers in order to find that Motivating Key.

Not only must you ask questions, you must ask plenty of open questions.

An open question is one which can't be answered with 'yes' or 'no'. It will attract an answer that is full of information.

Open questions usually start with the words:

Who
What
Why
When
Where *or*
How.

Exercise 20



Try to pose a question, starting with one of the six words above, to which someone can answer 'yes' or 'no'.

The power of open questions is that they demand information - so you find out faster. Closed questions (ones that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no') also have a value - they confirm information that has already been received. For example:

“What sort of shoes are you looking for, madam?” (open question)

“I’ve just bought a red dress and matching bag. I need the shoes to match.”
(information received)

“So, it’s a red pair you want?” (closed question)

“That’s right.” (confirmation of information received)

A combination of an *open* question followed by a *closed* one is a very effective way of controlling the sales conversation. It also means that you become perfectly clear what the buyer wants.

Asking good questions, listening carefully to the answers and confirming the information received, help you find the Motivating Key - and that unlocks the door to the sale.

Exercise 21

Turn back to page 13 where you completed Exercise 9 - your list of features and benefits.

You will need a friend or colleague to help you with this exercise. Give your list to the other person. Ask your colleague to play the part of a buyer. You play the part of a seller.

Buyer: Select one benefit from the seller’s list but do not say which one it is. (Don’t volunteer the information, make them work hard for it).

Seller: Question the buyer to discover which of the benefits they have chosen.

Now ask yourselves:

- Who was doing more of the talking - the buyer or the seller?
- Who should have been doing more of the talking?
- How can you use more open questions?



Bargain

“You want to improve your selling skills. *If* we could give you a powerful technique, *then* would you put it into practice?”

Bargain questions will:

- check that you have fully understood their wants and gain a commitment from them.
- check that the person you are dealing with can (alone) make a decision.

Examples:

- “Mrs Watson, you need x and y for your packaging department. *If* I could satisfy you that we can provide what you want, *then* would you be happy to go ahead?”
- “Mrs Brown, *if* I could prove that we could give you the reliability you need, *then* would you place an order with us?”
- “Mr Patel, *if* I can satisfy you on all these points, *then* would you like to have one today?”

You will appreciate that it’s the “... *if*... *then* ...” that makes it a Bargain question.

You can, of course, use alternative words that produce the same results.

If the answer to a Bargain question is “no”, find out why - **ask!** The reason will usually be either that:

- you haven’t discovered all the Motivating Key points. So, go back to ‘A’ and ask again, *or*
- the potential customer cannot, alone, make a decision. So, don’t try to close the sale. Instead, rephrase the Bargain question, eg “... *then* would you be prepared to recommend it to your Board of Directors?”

Correspond

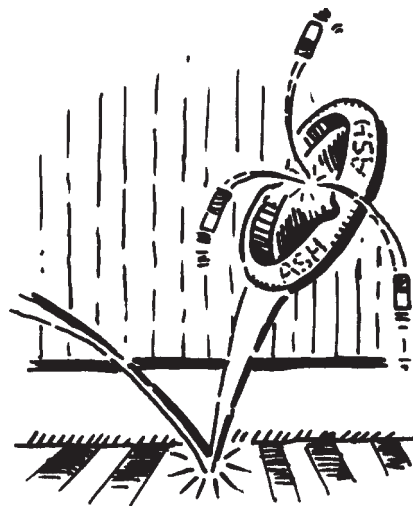
Having gently obtained a commitment with your Bargain question, you now need to prove to your potential customer that your product or service will produce a result that 'corresponds' with their wants.

There are several ways of proving what you say. For example:

- by demonstration
- by taste/sampling
- by written proof
- by verbal proof.

Examples

- A hotel proprietress is interested in purchasing some ashtrays. You have discovered her Motivating Key - the ashtrays must look attractive and be unbreakable. By using a Bargain question, you have got her to confirm that she will buy, provided that she is satisfied on the two requirements. Simply looking at an ashtray can satisfy the first requirement. To prove they are unbreakable, you could get her to throw an ashtray on to the floor. What more firm and dramatic demonstration could there be?
- A catering company buyer is interested in a new supplier for canned fruits. The Motivating Key is 'good taste'. Simply let him taste the product for himself.
- A householder is interested in having her house fitted with double-glazing. The Motivating Key is that the work must be guaranteed. Simply show her your firm's guarantee.
- A shopkeeper agrees she will take your product, provided that she has some promotional support to help her to sell. Tell her of the advertising and consumer offers that your firm has arranged to help retailers. Show her a rough of the advert and the advertising schedule.



Exercise 22

This exercise continues from Exercise 21 (on page 40). You still need to work with your friend or colleague.

Repeat Exercise 21 but, this time, when you, the seller, have found the buyer's Motivating Key(s), ie what the buyer wants - then you, the seller, carries on and 'corresponds'.

Example of the ABC technique in action

Imagine you are a supplier of computer software. You specialise in stock control systems. Your potential customer is a grocery wholesaler.

You have arranged an appointment by telephone. The wholesaler has expressed an interest.

You are now seated in the wholesaler's office. You look the part and have exchanged brief pleasantries . . .

You: "When we spoke on the telephone, Mr Winter, you said that you might be interested in a new stock control system."

Him: "Well, I'm prepared to at least look. Whether or not it will be any good for me, I'm not sure."

You: "No, of course not, Mr Winter. Although the system has proved successful for many other wholesalers, I don't know, at this stage, if the system will be of any use to you. To see if it may be, may I ask you a few, brief questions?"

Him: "Yes, of course."

You: "Fine. What sort of stock control system do you use at the moment, Mr Winter?"

Him: "We use a simple card system. Some stock we count ourselves at the end of each month and some is counted for us by manufacturers' agents who keep their own records and make sure we always have sufficient stocks of their products."

You: “I see. You count some, and the rest is counted for you by agents?”

Him: “Yes, that’s right.”

You: “How long each month do your own staff spend in taking stock, Mr Winter?”

Him: “I’m not sure exactly. Three people for the best part of one day a month I should think.”

You: “So that’s around eighteen hours each month?”

Him: “Yes, that sounds about right.”

You: “I can see the advantages of your existing system, Mr Winter. What would you say were the main drawbacks?”

Him: “Well, it works pretty well, all in all. We have experienced some ‘out of stock’ problems when I just couldn’t release the staff to do the monthly stock-take on time. And, of course, saving those three days of man-hours would be useful.”

You: “Yes, time is something we never seem to have enough of, isn’t it? Apart from ensuring that you were never out of stock, and the saving of those man-hours, is there anything else that you would require from a stock control system?”

Him: “No, I don’t think so. Mind you, I wouldn’t want it to be complicated and difficult to use.”

You: “Yes, I can appreciate that, Mr Winter. If I could show you a system that is easy to operate and saved you time and solved out of stock problems, **then** would you be happy to have it?”

Him: “Hm, but I would have to be absolutely sure that it could do those things.”

You: “And if you were absolutely sure . . . ?”

Him: “Yes, I’d go ahead with it.”

You: “I believe that our system would exactly meet with your requirements, Mr Winter. It actually works by computer and all my existing clients comment on the ease of operation.”

Next, you Correspond. You need to prove that your system meets your potential customer’s requirements. It may be by:

Demonstration - showing how the system works and letting him operate it.

Testimonial - maybe you have some testimonial letters from happy customers to show Mr Winter or, perhaps, they are prepared to speak to him by phone.

Verbal proof - we would make verbal statements to reinforce the demonstration and written proof.

Each time you ‘correspond’ your benefits to their Motivating Key, you must get their confirmation that you have ‘corresponded’ satisfactorily.

Now you move onto the final step - close the sale.



Closing the Sale!

Step 3 Close the Sale

There is a simple way to ensure that your clients never say “No” to you at the end of your sales presentations. All you have to do is fail to ask for the order! If you don’t ask, they can’t say “No”, can they?

There is a snag. If they can’t say “No”, they can’t say “Yes” either. Also, before you make a sales presentation, it’s already “no”, isn’t it?

For most people, closing the sale is the hardest step. Why?

“No”. “No”. “No”. “No”. “No”.

So much heartache can be caused by that little word. Parents, schoolteachers, bosses etc. Remember, all your young life, people were telling you “No”. Just think what that has done to you.

Now think of it this way. It’s unlikely that buyers will want to embarrass or upset you. So, if they say “No”, they’re talking about your product, not you!



Consider the situation. You have, by asking questions, found out what your customer wants. They have confirmed that your benefits correspond with those wants. Your customer told you that, *if* you could provide what they wanted, *then* you could have the business.

So, *ask for the order!*

Let’s look at five different ways of Closing the Sale.

Five Ways of Closing the Sale

Most ways of closing the sale have one thing in common. You ask a closing question then you shut up!

A closing question is any question that gets an answer which confirms the order.

Five closing questions are shown below. The first two are the most commonly used.

1 Alternative questions

Don't offer a choice between "yes" and "no". Offer a choice between "yes" and "yes". So, not "Do you want one?" but "Do you want this one or that one?"

- "Would you like the red one or the blue one?"
- "Cash or credit card, sir?"

2 Minor questions

A minor point is agreed and the major decision is automatically carried.

- "What colour upholstery would you prefer, madam?"
(Not "Do you want the car?")
- "Would you like to use my pen to sign the order form, madam?"
- "Will that be all, sir?" and wrap it up.
- "What is your full name, Mrs Smith?" (where an order form is involved).



3 Sharp-angle technique

They say: "Do you have the model in red?"

You say: "Do you want a red one?" ("Yes" means a sale).

They say: "Could you deliver by the weekend?"

You say: "Would you like delivery by the weekend?" ("Yes" means a sale).

4 Final Objection

To be used when your customer raises one objection, then another and another . . . If you suspect this is happening, list **all** the objections. Check you have them **all** written down. Answer all but one then ask a Bargain question "... **if** ... **then** ...". Answer that final objection and you've got the sale. Of course, it only works if you can answer the final objection!

5 I'll think it over

Perhaps the most common objection of all. It quite often means "no", but not always.

Check first - did you find the correct and full Motivating Key?

Have you Corresponded satisfactorily?

Find out - ask.

If it is a simple - "Everything's alright, I just want to think it over", you say:



"That's great, Mr Winter. Obviously, you wouldn't want to waste your time thinking about it unless you were really interested, would you?" (Get confirmation). "Presumably, you just want to be sure you're doing the right thing". (Get confirmation). "I can understand that. I would feel the same. Just to get things clear in my mind, what aspect of the . . . is it that you are not too happy about, is it the (colour)?"

"No."

"Is it the (delivery)?"

“No.”

“Is it the (price)?”

“Yes, that’s it. It’s the (price).”

“Oh, yes, the (price). Pity about that because I think you would have had it if it wasn’t for the (price), wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, if it hadn’t been for the (price), yes.”

You’ve now revealed a final objection. Use the final objection technique (above).

Exercise 23



What could you say to close the sale? Put some more examples here.

Section 9

Telephone Selling

Like calls to arrange appointments, you need a prime objective and a fall back objective when making telephone sales calls. Obviously, the prime objective is to make a sale or a multiple sale.

Your fall back objective might be:

- to arrange a visit
- to call back at a later date
- to send literature.

Telephone selling is difficult because you are not talking to your customer face to face. Try the following two exercises to illustrate why telephone communication requires extra skill.

Exercise 24

We communicate by a mixture of body language, tone of voice and the actual words themselves. Experts have allocated percentages to the effectiveness of each facet. What do you think those percentages are?

Your Guess

Body language

 %

Tone of voice

 %

Words

 %

Check the experts' opinion on page 73.

Exercise 25

Without drawing anything on paper, or using your hands, describe a spiral staircase to somebody you know.

This exercise demonstrates the extent to which we rely on hand and body gestures to communicate with other people. You aren't able to use these gestures when trying to sell over the telephone.

To get over these problems, you need a script.

The script, of course, differs from the 'appointment making' one. This is because you now need to discover customers' needs and show how you can satisfy those needs.

The sequence is as follows: **IRABCC**

Introduction Introduce yourself, your organisation and what it does. Use the statement-question technique.

Reason Explain the reasons for your call - and how the customer will benefit.

Ask Ask them if you can ask some questions. Use open questions to obtain information.

Bargain Bargain with your potential customer. Get confirmation that, if you can provide what they want, then you will do business together.

Correspond Show that what you are offering corresponds with your customer's requirements. Prove, to the customer's satisfaction, that you can provide what they want.

Confirm Confirm the order or the next step and ring off.

Example

Here's an example of a script using the **IRABCC** sequence.

Objective? To get a sale.

Fall back? To visit when you (or your staff) are next in the area.

Introduction "Good morning, Mr Smith. My name is Alan Jones from Bitz and Partz. Are you aware of our services, Mr Smith?"

(If yes) "Oh good. Well . . ."

(If no) "Well, we are in the motor parts business, Mr Smith . . ."

Reason ". . . the reason for my contacting you today is to talk about how we may be able to help you."

Ask "Could I just ask you, Mr Smith, what parts you use on a regular basis?"

"Do you normally collect parts as you need them or do you have them delivered?"

"Presumably another delivery service, provided that the cost was right, would be useful to you? Obviously, it would save you time and give you a better chance of really quick delivery wouldn't it?"

"Do you, Mr Smith, have any items that you keep in stock?"

Bargain "Mr Smith, if I can satisfy you on our level of service - particularly our speed of delivery - then, presumably, you would be happy to use us?"

"We are used by a large number of companies such as yours, many of whom you probably know, but obviously real proof is best obtained by actually making a delivery to you."

Continued overleaf

“What is the next order for parts you are intending to make, Mr Smith?”

“And what sort of price would those be?”

Correspond “Well we can match those, Mr Smith; when would you need delivery?”

“That is no problem, we can certainly have them to you by then.”

“I know you will be impressed with our service, Mr Smith, and I look forward to meeting you.”

Confirm the “In the meantime, I’ll arrange for delivery of
. by at the latest.”

“Thank you very much, Mr Smith. Goodbye.”

Now do that for your own organisation

Exercise 26

Your Telephone Script IRABCC



Objective(s)? _____

Fall back(s)? _____

Introduction _____

Reason _____

Ask
(Ask open questions) _____

Continued overleaf

Exercise 26 (contd)

Bargain

Correspond

**Confirm
the Order**

Exercise 27

Get together yourself and two other colleagues. Work in your group of three. One person acts the role of someone making an outgoing sales call. A second person acts the role of the person receiving that call. The third person acts the role of overlooker. The 'caller' and the 'receiver' sit back to back to role play the situation. The 'overlooker' takes notes and finally reports back on the conversation.

How to be successful

- You must be persistent. Failure cannot live with persistency.
- You must keep on keeping on.
- Did you know that Thomas Eddison tried more than 1000 ways to make the incandescent electric light bulb before he made it work?
- Colonel Saunders (of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame) made more than 1000 calls before persuading someone to use his recipe.
- Selling - be it of a product, service or an appointment is a 'numbers game'. The more calls you make, the more sales you will win.

**You must be able to accept the “Nos”**

However proficient you become in the sales world, some people (let's be honest, most people!) will say “no” to you. On the face of it, that is a good reason not to start!

But consider this. Unless you run the risk of getting a “no”, there is no chance of getting a “yes”.

Making sales (and obtaining appointments by telephone) is easy - as long as you stick to the rules and *learn to accept the “no's”*.

Every prospective customer has a right to say “no”. Your product or service will not be right for everyone. Remember that you are not being personally rejected. Your job is to make as many people as possible aware of the opportunity you offer. Nothing more or less than that.

Reminder. Learn to accept the “no” for, without it, you will not get any “yes”.

Some Do's and Don'ts of Telephone Selling

Do

<i>Stand Up</i>	We sound more enthusiastic when standing up. Enthusiasm sells!
<i>Prepare</i>	Have as much information to hand as possible about your product/service and about your prospective customer.
<i>Find the name</i>	Get to know the name of the buyer before you are connected.
<i>Explore problems</i>	Discuss their problems and future worries.
<i>Talk benefits</i>	Remember the buyer will only be interested in what is in it for his company.
<i>Correspond</i>	Tailor information to the person you are speaking to.

Don't

<i>Waste time</i>	Buyers will not thank you for idle chit chat.
<i>Invite rejection</i>	Don't say, “Might you/could you be interested?”
<i>Ask closed questions</i>	“Yes” or “No” answers aren't usually the quickest way to gain information.
<i>Be a ‘pitcher’</i>	No quick talking hard sell tactics. They simply do not work.
<i>Knock</i>	Running down their existing suppliers is not professional and often causes your prospective customer to fight their corner.

Section 10

Objections

There are two main types of objection:

- **excuses** - to avoid making a decision or avoid telling you what the decision is
- **genuine areas of concern.**

Handle Some in Advance

If you can predict that an objection will be raised, the best time to handle it is before it is raised. For example, suppose potential customers usually object to your slow delivery. Before the next one raises the objection, you might say:

“Of course, other firms can give you delivery from stock. That’s because their products are standardised and made on a production line. What we do is design and make each one to the customers’ own specifications. That way you get exactly what you want. The slight delay with delivery is worth it when you see the difference.”

How to Handle the Rest

Throughout the objection handling procedure:

listen . . . welcome the objection
pause before you reply.

Don’t fear objections . . . use the **FEAR** technique.

Find the real reason

Make sure you really understand it by asking them to clarify it. You will find that, sometimes, they answer their own objection. For example:

“Compared with . . . ?”

“How do you mean?”

Empathise

Remember people buy people first. For example:

“I can see why you feel that.”

“That’s a good point. If I was you, I would be concerned about that.”



Answer

Two main approaches:

Remove it

Show it doesn’t really apply in this case. For example:

“Yes, it would be dangerous. That’s why we installed this safety device to prevent it happening.”

Accept it but outweigh it

Agree their point is valid but offer more benefits that outweigh it, eg:

“Yes, you’re right, our price is £1.55 higher than XYZ Ltd but it represents much better value for money. With our product, you get an extra year’s guarantee, perfect colour co-ordination and free delivery.”

Reconcile

(verb: bring back into friendship, settle, harmonise, show compatibility of)

In other words, make sure they are happy and there are no vestiges of concern over that point, eg:

“So, does that put your mind completely at rest on that point?”

Exercise 28



**List here the 2
objections you
face most often**

Write down your best response to them here

1

Find the real reason

Empathise

Answer

Reconcile

2

Find the real reason

Empathise

Answer

Reconcile

Section 11

How to Keep Records

What information do you need?

Here is a simple system which will list the information that you require to help you win more sales by working more efficiently.

Telephone Call Sheet

A useful daily call sheet might have the following headings.

Company			Contact Name	Source	Purpose of Call	Result	Further Action
Name	Address	Tel No					
↑			↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
<i>Potential client company details</i>			<i>Name of decision maker</i>	<i>Where/how you obtained the contact</i>	<i>Self-explanatory</i>		<i>What else do you need to do?</i>

At the end of the day, count and record the number of calls, number of appointments and number of sales. Work out the ratios. Monitor your progress.

Your call sheet should be dated and filed in date order.

Information from your daily call sheets should be transferred onto customer record cards. These cards should also list any personal details. This may prove valuable at a later stage. Don't forget to leave room on your cards to list the dates of future calls.

What information do you require to help you when you make future calls. Do you need space for special information?

Telephone Call Sheet

COMPANY			CONTACT NAME	SOURCE	PURPOSE OF CALL	RESULT	FURTHER ACTION
NAME	ADDRESS	TEL NO					

Section 12

How to Motivate Yourself

What are your objectives? Business and personal.

What do you want in terms of appointments, sales, life?

Let's think this through.

If you keep records and work out your averages, you will know the answers to these questions.

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| (a) How many calls do you need to make an appointment? | <input type="text"/> |
| (b) How many appointments do you need to make a sale? | <input type="text"/> |
| (c) What's the average value (to you) of a sale (£)? | <input type="text"/> |
| (d) So the value of every telephone call you make = $c \div (a \times b) =$ | <input type="text"/> |
| (e) How many calls do you make per day? | <input type="text"/> |
| (f) So your daily income = $d \times e =$ | <input type="text"/> |
| (g) How many days do you do this in a year? | <input type="text"/> |
| (h) So your annual income = $f \times g =$ | <input type="text"/> |

Take a target income and divide by your telephone call value (d). Then divide that result by the number of weeks and then the number of days in a week that you intend to work. This will give you the number of telephone calls you need to make each day to achieve your target income. This will enable you to check if your target is realistic.

Example

(a)	Calls to make an appointment	=	5
(b)	Appointments to make 1 sale	=	4
(c)	Average value of 1 sale	=	£200
(d)	Value of each call = $c \div (a \times b)$	=	£10
(e)	Calls per day	=	10
(f)	Daily income	=	£100
(g)	Days per annum	=	225
(h)	Annual income = $f \times g$	=	£22,500

Suppose your target income is £45000 per annum.

You need to double your calls per day to 20. Is that realistic?

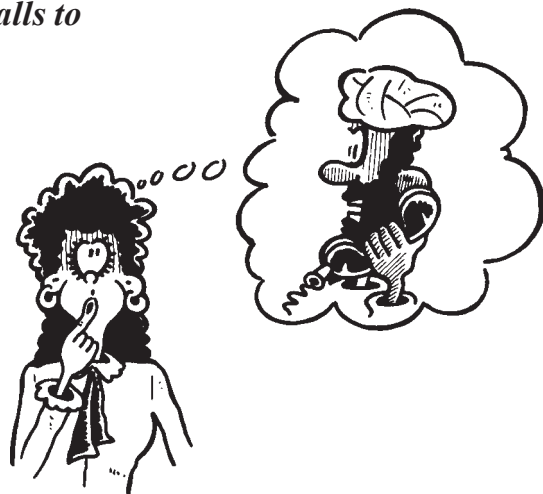
(Alternatively, you need to improve your ratio (a) - calls to make an appointment. Is that possible? Or, to increase the value of (c) - the average value per sale. Could you do that?)

Achievement is about planning. Knowing what you want and working out what you need to do to achieve it.

Many times you hear sales people say things like, "I'm okay when I've made the first four calls. I'm warmed up then and in the swing of things."

If those people make telephone calls every day - 5 days a week and 45 weeks a year, ***they waste 900 calls to prospective customers every year!***

To use prospective clients to 'warm up' on is obviously stupid. It's much better to use 'Mental Rehearsal' before you actually pick up the phone.



Mental Rehearsal?

Well, all you do is sit quietly, close your eyes and make imaginary telephone calls. Visualise yourself speaking to the 'buffer' and being put through to the decision maker. Practise what you are going to say. Imagine their replies. Always end with obtaining an appointment or a sale!

Make several calls, use your imagination to alter each call in terms of comments and questions from your prospective customers. Work out your perfect answers.

Practise Mental Rehearsal calls before each telephone session. You will find it works! You will smile inwardly when a prospective customer in a real call says something you imagined they might say in your Mental Rehearsal. You can then, smoothly, give them your 'mentally rehearsed' reply.

Exercise 29 Try out a Mental Rehearsal now!

Appendix 1

Your Personal Action Plan

My prime objectives for the next twelve months are:	1	_____
	2	_____
	3	_____
	4	_____

What do I need to do to achieve my objective?	When?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Appendix 2

Answers to Exercises

Exercise 1

Page 2

- *Salespeople are born with a natural ability to sell.*

True. We all are. In the same way that we are born with the ability to sing. Training can, in both cases, help us to be better, more professional.

- *The 'gift of the gab' is needed to get people to buy.*

False. You cannot force people to buy things. They need to be convinced of the worth to them. Listening is just as important as talking.

- *Shy people never succeed in the sales world.*

False. You have to be interested in the customer - but that doesn't preclude shy people. Shy people may be perceived as more genuine, more thoughtful, less brash.

- *Good salespeople tell what they have to offer and ask for the order.*

False. Good sales people find what is wanted and show how to get it.

- *Salespeople carefully explain why you need their products.*

False. Sales people either show how their products fulfil an existing need or they create a desire for them.

- *Good salespeople can sell almost anything to anybody.*

False. You cannot sell anything to anyone unless they want it.

Exercise 3 Page 8

In most business situations, customers expect a sales person to be clean, polite and smartly dressed. It is hard to to have confidence in a person who does not look and act professionally.

For most males and females, this usually means a business suit. It is true that some industries have a more casual attitude to dress. However, it is **more** difficult to look smart in casual dress compared to a business suit.

For men, a collar and tie is safer. For women, a smartly presented blouse. Body piercing, garish colours and oddly coloured hair, (eg red) make it difficult for the sales person to be taken seriously.

Exercise 4 Page 9

An American survey shows that **more than** 90% of our success is dependent on the correct mental attitude.

Exercise 5 Page 10

A survey of buyers showed that, more than any other attribute, they were most impressed by the **enthusiasm** shown by sellers. (The next most important attributes in order of preference were 'ability to close the sale' and 'product knowledge'.)

Exercise 8 Page 10

To be more successful, you have to be good at all ten factors so your biggest improvement will probably come from working hardest at the three you are least confident about. Make a note to improve your ability in these areas on your Personal Action Plan - page 69.

Exercise 10 Page 15

People call into a business for all sorts of reasons. However, some of these callers will be looking to buy. It is important that buyers get the right impression from the moment the phone is answered. This section is concerned with giving that positive impression.

Exercise 11a Page 15

When two strangers meet face to face, they usually shake hands, introduce themselves and make an effort to start a two-way dialogue.

Exercise 11b Page 15

Most people answering the phone simply announce the name or extension number which the caller has reached. There is no effort on the caller's part to 'bridge the telephone gap'.

Exercise 12 Page 16

The greeting that you use should be natural for you and should be of your own devising. Most people end up with a greeting along the following lines:

“Good morning, John Smith Limited”. (“Thank you for calling.”) “Linda speaking.” “How can I help you?”

The bracketed statement may be (mostly is) omitted. Be sure to write out your own script and stick with it.

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Body language	55%
Tone of voice	38%
Words	7%

