



NATIONAL DIPLOMA: CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

ID 20908 LEVEL 5 – CREDITS 243

LEARNER GUIDE

SAQA: 10047

CLOSE A DEAL WITH A CUSTOMER

Learner Information:

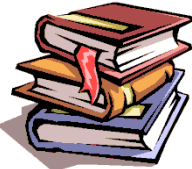


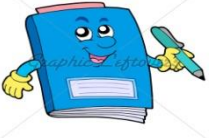
Details	Please Complete this Section
Name & Surname:	
Organisation:	
Unit/Dept:	
Facilitator Name:	
Date Started:	
Date of Completion:	


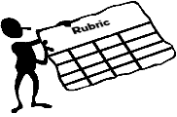



Copyright

All rights reserved. The copyright of this document, its previous editions and any annexures thereto, is protected and expressly reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrievable system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission.

Key to Icons

The following icons may be used in this Learner Guide to indicate specific functions:

 Books	This icon means that other books are available for further information on a particular topic/subject.
 References	This icon refers to any examples, handouts, checklists, etc...
 Important	This icon represents important information related to a specific topic or section of the guide.
 Activities	This icon helps you to be prepared for the learning to follow or assist you to demonstrate understanding of module content. Shows transference of knowledge and skill.
	This icon represents any exercise to be completed on a specific topic at home by you or in a group.

 <p>Exercises</p>	
 <p>Tasks/Projects</p>	<p>An important aspect of the assessment process is proof of competence. This can be achieved by observation or a portfolio of evidence should be submitted in this regard.</p>
 <p>Workplace Activities</p>	<p>An important aspect of learning is through workplace experience. Activities with this icon can only be completed once a learner is in the workplace</p>
 <p>Tips</p>	<p>This icon indicates practical tips you can adopt in the future.</p>
 <p>Notes</p>	<p>This icon represents important notes you must remember as part of the learning process.</p>

NOTIONAL HOURS BREAKDOWN

The candidate undertaking this unit standard is best advised to at least spend fifty hours of study time on this learning programme. Below is a table which demonstrates how these fifty hours could be spread:

TIMEFRAME

Total Notional Hours	Contact Time	Non contact- Self-Study/Assessment
Credits (10) x 5 = 50	15 HRS	35 HRS

1.	Learning Programme Name:	REFER TO COVER PAGE									
2.	SAQA Qualification/ Unit Standard Title:	REFER TO COVER PAGE									
3.	Qualification/ Unit Standard	4.	SAQA ID	10047	5.	NQF Level	5	6.	Credits	5	
7.	<u>PURPOSE</u> for offering this programme to your learners:	REFER TO NEXT PAGE									
8.	<u>TARGET AUDIENCE</u> for this specific programme:	REFER TO NEXT PAGE									
9.	Entry/Admission Requirements:	REFER TO NEXT PAGE									
10.	Timeframe for Train (Total Hours/Days/ Weeks)	Theory content –Role play, Simulation, Group work, Pair work = 15hrs. Non contact session- self-study, assignment, practise guided by coach or mentor, formative assessment and summative assessment = 35 hrs.									

Learner Guide Introduction

About the Learner Guide...	This Learner Guide provides a comprehensive overview of the Close a deal with a customer , and forms part of a series of Learner Guides that have been developed. The series of Learner Guides are conceptualized in modular's format and developed. They are designed to improve the skills and knowledge of learners, and thus enabling them to effectively and efficiently complete specific tasks. Learners are required to attend training workshops as a group or as specified by their organization. These workshops are presented in modules, and conducted by a qualified facilitator.
Purpose	The purpose of this Unit Standard is to Close a deal with a customer
Outcomes	Close a deal with a customer
Assessment Criteria	The only way to establish whether a learner is competent and has accomplished the specific outcomes is through an assessment process. Assessment involves collecting and interpreting evidence about the learner's ability to perform a task. This guide may include assessments in the form of activities, assignments, tasks or projects, as well as workplace practical tasks. Learners are required to perform tasks on the job to collect enough and appropriate evidence for their portfolio of evidence, proof signed by their supervisor that the tasks were performed successfully.
To qualify	To qualify and receive credits towards the learning programme, a registered assessor will conduct an evaluation

	and assessment of the learner's portfolio of evidence and competency
Range of Learning	This describes the situation and circumstance in which competence must be demonstrated and the parameters in which learners operate
Responsibility	<p>The responsibility of learning rest with the learner, so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive and ask questions, • Seek assistance and help from your facilitators, if required.

Close a deal with a customer

Learning Unit 1

UNIT STANDARD NUMBER	:	10047
LEVEL ON THE NQF	:	5
CREDITS	:	8
FIELD	:	Business, Commerce and Management Studies
SUB FIELD	:	Marketing

PURPOSE:	<p>This unit standard forms part of the qualification, National Certificate in Contact Centre Operations NQF Level 4. Learners working towards this unit standard will be learning towards the full qualification, or will be working within a Contact Centre environment, where the acquisition of competence against this standard will add value to learner`s job. This unit standard is intended to enhance the provision of intermediate level service within the Contact Centre industry.</p> <p>The qualifying learner is capable of:</p> <p>Applying personal selling skills to sell products or services.</p> <p>Applying closing techniques to sell products or services.</p>
LEARNING ASSUMED TO BE IN PLACE:	
<p>Learners accessing this unit standard or qualification will have demonstrated competency against unit standards in Contact Centres at NQF Level 2 or equivalent.</p> <p>Learners are expected to have demonstrated competency in language, numeracy, literacy and communication at NQF Level 4 or equivalent.</p>	

SESSION 1.

Apply personal selling skills to sell products or services

Learning Outcomes

- 1. Product, service and client information is established in relation to selling the product or service.
- 2. Techniques are incorporated in relation to listening, observation and questioning in relation to closing the deal.
- 3. Techniques are incorporated and applied that identify and qualify the customers and their needs.
- 4. Sales presentation techniques are applied to enable the deal to be closed.
- 5. Techniques are incorporated and applied that allow for the handling of objections by the customer.
-

Product, service and client information

Knowing your products and services

Product knowledge is an essential sales skill. Understanding your products' features allows you to present their benefits accurately and persuasively. Customers respond to enthusiastic sales staff that is passionate about their products and eager to share the benefits with them.

Get to know your products or services

Customers are more likely to trust sales people who show confidence in themselves and what they are selling. You can build this confidence by increasing your knowledge of your products or services. Use conventional and creative sources of information to learn about your products or services, including:

- your own experiences using the products
- product literature such as brochures and catalogues
- feedback from customers

- trade and industry publications
- internal sales records
- your team members
- visits to manufacturers
- sales training programs
- Competitor information.

Turn product features into benefits

As you engage customers, you can use your knowledge to lead your customer through the sales process, and make their experience an enjoyable one that they'll want to revisit. Successful salespeople know all of their products' features and skilfully turn these features into benefits for their customers. To practice this skill, list your product's features, potential benefits, and all information up front for your customers. Consider how you can communicate the potential benefits, for example:

Product features	Possible benefits for your customer
Its purpose	It will meet your needs and save you time and money
How it works	It is easy to use so you won't be frustrated by complicated features
How it is developed or manufactured	It supports local industry and helps the environment
How it is checked for quality	You can be confident it will work
How it is delivered	You don't have to worry about delivery; we organise that for you
How it is maintained and serviced	You can be assured that if it needs maintenance, we will take care of it for you
How long it is likely to last (including any warranties)	You can be confident that if it has any problems we will fix it or replace it while under warranty
Its price	You can comfortably afford it

How it compares to similar products the business offers	You can base your decision on the good reputation our business has earned for selling other well-regarded products
How it compares to competitors' products	You are receiving quality and value for money
Its strengths and limitations (the capability of the product to deliver benefits to clients)	You are buying a product that is well-matched to your particular needs
Other products that might complement it	Buying this companion product will allow you to meet the needs of your entire household

Techniques

Personality and Attitude Required

To sell a product, you first need to sell your attitude. After all, why would someone buy a product if they don't feel like listening to you in the first place? So, the primary requirement is confidence and attitude training which is discussed in the following points:



Conquer Your Fears

Overcoming your fear of rejection is the first step! If you don't believe in yourself when facing a prospect, why would he/she believe in your product/service? Whenever you approach a prospect with an offer, there are only and precisely two possibilities - either you'll close the deal or you won't! There is no third option so no uncertainties either! Get used to "NO" as you'll be hearing quite a lot of it in your chosen field. Rejection is not the end of the world. Even if you momentarily crumble under it, learn to bounce back and stand up again!

Stop Being a Sucker for Approval

Just because your peers and superiors don't pat your back every time you do something good doesn't mean you're a nobody! Rise above the need for approval as a motivation to do better! Be a self motivator and set standards for yourself. Don't interpret lack of praises as something lacking in you. In fact, a constant hankering for approval and morbid fear of rejection is a tell-tale sign of insecurity. Selling is all about being confident - if you're not sure of yourself, how the hell can you ever convince your prospect to have

faith in your proposition and buy your product?

Avoid Being Uselessly Perfectionist

Relentless pursuit of perfection in everything causes stress and induces unwanted aggression. Instead, replace PERFECTION with EXCELLENCE and feel the difference! Type-A behavior will only burn you out and will affect your physical and mental health, thereby, jeopardizing your professional as well as personal life. Remember, the concept of perfection is based upon man-made assumptions of flawlessness - that itself renders the concept imperfect! Therefore, it is always better to give your best shot to everything you do - believe me, it will take you closer to your goals than sticking to some unreliable standards of perfection!

Stop Taking Negativity Personally

When you enter the arena of sales, you would be subject to a lot of not-so-pleasant experiences with customers and prospects. In case of door-to-door or direct B2B selling, you will come across a lot of rude behavior and harshness which, most of the time, is totally uncalled-for. It is during these times that you need to keep in mind that it's not YOU who are the target of all the negativity and verbal hostility. Rather, it is your role as the representative of your company and its offerings that are being targeted. Remembering this will help you continue your role as the representative of your company which will, in turn, help you react to such an unpleasant situation in a way the company would have wanted you to - by showing tremendous amounts of patience and a willingness to serve the customer/prospect irrespective of their attitude towards you.

Sales Training Process and Required Skills

After a couple of sessions on attitude training, subjective training of sales process and required skills may be commenced. It may include:

Developing Process Knowledge

Building and strengthening the theoretical foundation is of utmost importance. Brush up on sales skills by including sales exercises and role play assignments. Reinforce theoretical

knowledge by holding interactive sessions and presentations.

Developing Product Knowledge

You must know what you intend to sell! This is especially true in case of corporate sales. This is one of the most important salesman tips. You need to know your product/service inside out and everything relating to it - from industry, competitors, target customers to pricing policy, customer relations and everything else!

Sharpening Communication Skills

Running a workshop on developing sales communication skills is among the most important sales training ideas and should include communication skills exercises and sessions on how to improve communication skills. The success of a sales pitch depends as much on the salesperson's communication skills as on the price and product/service features. Asking the right questions at the right time, advantage of employing direct over indirect approach and vice versa (given the situation), and the art of persuasion are some very critical interpersonal communication skills that may positively alter the course of a seemingly fruitless sales prospect!

Overcoming Objections

This is an important aspect of sales negotiation training. Train your personnel to tackle scenarios where the customer throws a "we have had a bad experience with your product/service in the past" or a "we're happy with our current supplier" towards them. Introduce role-playing exercises and share your own experiences in handling such roadblocks.

Closing Skills

Closing a sale should be considered as important as winning a prospect. Set up a workshop where trainees are given opportunities to creatively respond to new situations. Also, teaching participants how to handle queries relating to follow ups, replacements, warranties, etc. should be included among the training guidelines.

Building Relations

Interpersonal relations and personal impressions go a long way in determining the success of a sales prospect. To be a successful salesperson, one must build a positive professional relation with the customer and inspire trust in him/her. After identifying a prospect, one must gain an appointment with him/her to gain more information regarding their need for the product/service, etc. Most of the time, your sales pitch can be customized to match the product/service features/utilities to their requirements. This is true especially in case of car sales and car rental services. Having information of prospect's background (professional, personal, economic), gaining an appointment with the prospect and getting information regarding what he/she is looking for in the product/service are important pointers that may be included among training for selling industrial goods, B2B products and car automobiles.

Imparting a Personal Touch

This is especially important in personal selling. Helping a prospect decide upon the best option and assisting with the entire shopping process is a winning strategy in retail selling. Empathizing with the customer's needs rather than forcing your own opinion down his throat is always a bad idea! After all, the customer is the king and the king is always right. During my management study days, I had participated in a couple of sales events and projects and found that helping an elderly customer with her shopping bags, getting the billing done on the behalf of a young mother, who is carrying a whining kid in one arm and 2 heavy shopping bags in another, never goes waste! These gestures frequently result in customers returning to your store and a customer impressed is likely to return with two more prospects in tow! Personal impression is the most important factor for ensuring selling success.

Patience and Listening Skills

This is an extension of the 'stop-taking-negativity-personally' point elaborated in the previous segment. It is very important to practice, hone and apply this skill in order to be able to take negative customer experience with a pinch of salt. You see, if you wish to

succeed, you need to get rid of all ego and the best way to do this is by not taking things personally or getting emotional over customer outbursts. Remember, these outbursts are NOT directed towards YOU (customer/prospect doesn't even know you from Adam!). It's either the company/product you represent that is at the receiving or the customer/prospect is just having a bad day! You just happen to be the venting medium! If you can master this skill, there's nothing in the world that can ever keep you from becoming the best in your chosen field.

All ideas should be implemented keeping in mind that almost all forms of selling (except, perhaps, online selling) involves human interaction. Sales techniques and selling exercises should also include a section on sales etiquette, including how to approach a prospect, how to discuss the deal, how to close it, handling customer queries (no matter how irrelevant) and the importance of being regular with follow ups. The training guidelines should stress on the fact that a customer remains important even after the deal is closed. A satisfied customer is your best publicity media and it comes absolutely free!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS?

The more you know about your customers, the more effective your sales and marketing efforts will be. It's well worth making the effort to find out:

- **who** they are
- **what** they buy
- **why** they buy it

If you're selling to other businesses, you'll need to know which individuals are responsible for the decision to buy your product or service. For information on targeting decision-makers, see our guide on how to target the right people in an organisation.

You can learn a great deal about your customers by talking to them. Asking them why they're buying or not buying, what they may want to buy in the future and asking what other needs they have can give a valuable picture of what's important to them.

Strong sales are driven by emphasising the benefits that your product or service brings to your customers. If you know the challenges that face them, it's much easier to offer them

solutions. It's also well worth keeping an eye on **future developments** in your customers' markets and lives. Knowing the **trends** that are going to influence your customers helps you to **anticipate** what they are going to need - and offer it to them as soon as they need it. You can conduct your own market research and there are many existing reports that can help you build a picture of where your customers' markets - and your business - may be going.

THE CUSTOMER'S CURRENT SUPPLIER

Chances are your potential customer is already buying something similar to your product or service from **someone else**. Before you can sell to a potential customer, you need to know:

- who the customer's current supplier is
- if the customer is happy with their current supplier
- if buying from you would offer the customer any benefits - and, if so, what those benefits would be

The easiest way to identify a potential customer's current supplier is often simply to **ask them**. Generally people are very happy to offer this information, as well as an indication of whether they're happy with their present arrangements.

If you can find out what benefits they're looking for, you stand a better chance of being able to sell to them. The benefits may be related to price or levels of service, for example. Are there any benefits your business can offer that are **better** than those the potential customer already receives? If there are, these should form the basis of any sales approach you make.

TEN THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

1. Who they are

If you sell directly to individuals, find out your customers' gender, age, marital status and occupation. If you sell to other businesses, find out what size and kind of business they are. For example, are they a small private company or a big multinational?

2. What they do

If you sell directly to individuals, it's worth knowing their occupations and interests. If you sell to other businesses, it helps to have an understanding of what their business is trying to achieve.

3. **Why they buy**

If you know why customers buy a product or service, it's easier to match their needs to the benefits your business can offer.

4. **When they buy**

If you approach a customer just at the time they want to buy, you will massively increase your chances of success.

5. **How they buy**

For example, some people prefer to buy from a website, while others prefer a face-to-face meeting.

6. **How much money they have**

You'll be more successful if you can match what you're offering to what you know your customer can afford.

7. **What makes them feel good about buying**

If you know what makes them tick, you can serve them in the way they prefer.

8. **What they expect of you**

For example, if your customers expect reliable delivery and you don't disappoint them, you stand to gain repeat business.

9. **What they think about you**

If your customers enjoy dealing with you, they're likely to buy more. And you can only tackle problems that customers have if you know what they are.

10. **What they think about your competitors**

If you know how your customers view your competition, you stand a much better chance of staying ahead of your rivals.

6 Tips for Preparing and Delivering a Knockout Sales Presentation

1. Step Back and Evaluate your Presentation Skills

To help determine how you are doing today and where there may be room for improvement, follow these steps for evaluation your presentation skills:

- **Get Objective Feedback** - Take a colleague or mentor along to your presentation meetings over a period of a couple of weeks and ask them to review your performance. A simple analysis of your strengths and weaknesses is all you need, along with a discussion about where you can improve.

- **Listen or Watch Yourself** – One of the most effective ways to gauge and address your presentation skills is to record yourself delivering a mock presentation to other people. Use Skype, webinar software, or a video camera to capture a typical presentation and play it back. This is a technique commonly used by professional presentation training companies because it captures the critically important elements of a presentation – posture, voice, gesture, tone, and confidence. You'll be surprised at how effective it is. Use the feedback and your own self-assessment to address your weaknesses and build on your strengths, and repeat the process once a week.

2. Do Your Research First

Each customer and each sale is unique, so be sure to do your research so you can effectively tie your presentation to the customer's needs and establish a rapport based on a mutual understanding of their challenges and goals. Your research should include a review of the customer's competition, their market, as well as any media, coverage that relates to industry trends or customer news. If they are active on social media, follow them and read their blogs.

3. Tailor your Presentation to Your Audience

You probably have a canned sales presentation for each product, product suite, and so on. But consider tailoring it to the profile and needs of each customer. In addition to using the research you have gleaned to tailor your delivery, be sure to ask ahead who it is you will be talking to and adjust your presentation accordingly. For example, a technical audience will have different priorities and needs than will senior business management.

4. Ditch the Hefty Slide Deck – Less is More

Instead of using 50 slides to pitch your product, keep your slide deck brief. It should really only be a frame of reference for the key points you need to communicate and the story you want to tell. Too much information and you lose your audience and any chance of building rapport. Likewise, snipping copy and relying too heavily on bullet points will break down and confuse the story you are trying to tell. Instead, refer back to your research, tie your customer's needs and challenges to the points on the slides, ask questions, include examples, and focus the presentation on the room and those in it, not on your slide deck.

5. Go beyond PowerPoint with Web Presentation Tools

Remember: PowerPoint doesn't have to be your one and only go-to presentation tool. There are many free and low-cost web-based alternatives that can take you beyond bullet point slides to create dynamic presentations you can take and access anywhere. If you have the budget, you can also take advantage of mobile tablets to dynamically showcase product demos, client video testimonials, and more.

6. Be Yourself

Once you are comfortable with your material and confident of your delivery, don't forget to let yourself shine through. Above all, don't read what's on the screen; your eyes should be on the audience. Being genuine and personable is critical to gaining customer trust.

SESSION 2.

Apply closing techniques to sell products or services

Learning Outcomes

- 1. Closing or buying signals are observed and response is applied accordingly.
- 2. Closing the sale/deal in terms of confirmation of commitment or decision to purchase is demonstrated.
- 3. Closing techniques are applied to close the deal.
- 4. All relevant documentation to confirm the deal is completed.
- 5. Processes for follow-up with customers are applied in terms of monitoring the fulfilment of the deal.

Know Closing Techniques

Your ability to ask for the order at the end of the sales presentation or at the end of the **sales process** is absolutely essential to your success. Fortunately, tens of thousands of sales conversations have been videotaped and we now know exactly how the highest paid salespeople close sales, most of the time. There are three methods you can use. Before you close the sale, you ask this question, "Do you have any questions or concerns that I haven't covered so far?" If the customer says, "No," you can then lean forward and confidently ask for the buying decision. The first way to ask for the buying decision is the simplest of all. You say, "Well then, why don't you give it a try?" This is one of the disarmingly effective closing techniques. Or you can say, "Why don't you give us a try?" Or you can even say, "Why don't you take it?" You then reinforce this by adding the words, "And I'll take care of all the details." Often a customer didn't know how much he or she wanted it until you offered to take care of all the details. The second technique you can use is called the "Directive Close." You use these words, "Well then, the next step is this." You then go on to describe the plan of action and wrap up the sale just as if the person had said, "I'll take it!" You will also add the words, "And I'll take care of all the

details." This is one of the most popular **closing techniques** used by the highest paid salespeople in every industry. Another one of the popular closing techniques is called the "Authorization Close." At the end of the sales conversation, you take your order form, place a check mark by the signature line, push the order form across the desk and say these words, "Well then, if you'll just authorize this, we'll get started right away!" Sometimes the customer didn't know how badly he or she wanted it until you offered to get started, "right away." Remember, the future belongs to the "Askers." The future belongs to people who ask for appointments, ask for information and ask for the order. Never be afraid to ask for what you want. This is the key to making sales.

Make Every Minute Count

Your most precious resource is your time. It is all you have to sell. In fact, your entire life style today, your home, your car, your bank account, and so on are the result of how you have traded your time in the past. The very best use of your time is to increase your earning ability. It is to get better in your key result areas. You should pay any price, make any sacrifice and overcome any obstacle to become absolutely excellent in selling, to increase your earning ability so that you can enjoy a wonderful standard of living year after year.

The Sales Process: 80/20 Rule

The 80/20 Rule says that 20% of your activities will account for 80% of your results. 20% of your prospects will account for 80% of your customers. 20% of your customers will account for 80% of your sales. 20% of your products and services will account for 80% your sales volume, and so on. In its simplest terms, you must always be focusing your time and energy on the few things, the 20% of things, that can make all the difference in your life. Your ability to do this will guarantee that you will be a big success. The inability to focus on the top 20% is the primary reason for failure, frustration and under achievement in the sales profession. Make a list every day, before you begin work. Organize your list on the basis of the 80/20 Rule. Start on your top 20% of tasks and stay with them until they are complete.

Your Sales funnel

There are three parts to professional selling. They have been the same throughout all the ages of man. They are to prospect, present and follow up. These three parts constitute the sales funnel. At the top of the **sales funnel** you have prospects. Let us say that you have to prospect 20 people to get five presentations. In the middle of the sales funnel you have presenting. Let us say that you have to make five presentations to get two follow-ups. At the bottom of the sales funnel you have following up and closing. Let us say that you have to follow up with two prospects to get one sale. Spend 80% of your time prospecting and presenting and spend only 20% of your time following up. And don't mix them up. You should have far more prospects in your funnel than you have time to see if you work all day long. Never allow yourself to run out of prospects. Keep your sales funnel full. Remember, you have to go through a lot of prospects to get a very few sales. Thank you for reading this article about proper closing techniques and keeping your sales funnel full. Topics included in this article include

Sales Funnel

Sales Process

CLOSE AND FOLLOW UP THE SALE

If the sales appointment has gone well and the client is interested, signing the order may almost be a formality. Likewise, at the end of the appointment you may realise that the client is unlikely ever to agree to a deal. However, there are times when the client is still unsure or they may be nervous about signing a big order. This is understandable, given that they may not have used your product or service before. In this situation, the use of certain closing techniques may help them decide. Once the order has been signed, it is your chance to prove that you can match your words with actions. Exceeding expectations by adopting a professional approach to delivery and after-sales service can help to establish a lucrative and long-lasting client relationship.

This guide will take you through the steps required to close and then deliver on an agreed sale.

ASKING FOR THE BUSINESS

It is very likely that you will find it more productive to sell in a 'consultative' way rather than using pressure tactics, which are now outdated. This involves conducting research and structuring your sales call to help make closing the sale straightforward. However, you still need to gain the client's commitment, and the best way to do this is just to ask for the business in an assertive but polite manner.

Spotting buying signals

The best time to ask for the business will vary depending on the type of person you are dealing with and how the sales appointment has progressed. Many buying signals are obvious, e.g. the client repeatedly nodding in agreement or a positive tone to their questions. However, some buying signals may be less easy to spot and are often hidden amongst objections. It is therefore important to be enthusiastic about forming a relationship with the client, but not to get too excited and appear desperate. The client may not be quite ready to buy, so be prepared to resolve further issues if they still have objections to agreeing on a deal. Ask them about the objection and explain how you can overcome it.

Taking the order

You should be prepared to take an order on the day, even if you were told this was unlikely when you made the appointment. Have the necessary paperwork ready to take the order or agree on a contract. Many businesses have pre-printed order pads/contracts that contain all the standard terms and conditions. If you use a standard order pad, you may still need to leave space to write down any additional terms you have agreed that are particular to that deal. Ensure that you have drafted your paperwork with the help of a lawyer and explain any non-standard terms clearly to the client, including the procedure for cancelling the contract. Once this has been done, ask the client to sign the agreement and give them a copy. If they ask for time to go through all the terms and conditions before signing, consider asking them to sign a 'letter of intent', or even your meeting notes, to confirm their commitment.

METHODS FOR CLOSING THE SALE

Sometimes it may be necessary to try different ways of getting the client to agree to buy your product or service. The reasons for their initial reluctance may be varied, but often it could be as simple as nerves or the fear of making the wrong decision.

It is important to reassure the client that they will be in safe hands and to go over the benefits they will experience once they sign up. Show them any testimonials you have from your other clients - particularly if they are a well-known company.

Variations in closing

If you sense that directly asking for the business won't work, you could try:

- giving them an alternative – e.g. do you want the green or the red one?
- assuming they will sign – e.g. what day is best for us to deliver the goods?

In all cases, make sure you allow the buyer time to say "yes". If there is a pause after you've tried a closing question, let the potential client speak first. The client often needs a few moments to confirm to themselves that they are happy to go ahead, so speaking first could interrupt this thought process.

If you can't close on the day

If you are convinced that the client will not sign an order at the meeting but they still seem interested, offer to return with a tailored proposal. This can be risky as they may cancel once they are out of the atmosphere of the sales meeting, so make sure you confirm a date and time for a second meeting - ideally within a few days of the current meeting. Take this opportunity to write down any unresolved objections and explain that you will return with a firm proposal. It is a good idea to gain an idea of their budget if you haven't already done so. You may decide that the client is not ready to buy and may never be a serious prospect. If this is the case, politely thank them for their time and offer to keep in touch. It is better to invest your time in more serious prospects.

Remember, however, to ask them if they know of anyone else who may be interested in your product or service. For more information, see the page in this guide on referrals and testimonials.

NEGOTIATING THE SALE

Even if you manage to gain the client's commitment to signing an order, there may be a period of negotiation required to agree on the details.

Remember not to get carried away by the fact that you have potentially secured an order - you may still have to walk away if the deal doesn't suit your profit margins or your ability to deliver.

Negotiating on price

It is tempting to end up in a negotiation on the final cost of the deal, as it is almost certainly one of the elements that the client will try to negotiate on.

However, it is one element that is rarely advantageous to give ground on.

Provided you have set your price realistically, taking into account the cost of creating and delivering your product or service, lowering your price may:

- result in an unacceptable profit margin
- create an expectancy that you will lower it further
- indicate that it was too high in the first place
- affect your ability to deliver to the required standard

If the client insists on a price reduction per unit, offer to give them a discount based on a larger order. You could also offer to agree on a particular price if you can alter some elements of the proposed package, e.g. to a cheaper version or a later delivery time.

Take your time

Whatever happens in the negotiation, remain assertive but polite at all times. Don't be put off by comments designed to destabilise your position, e.g. "that's far too expensive". Outline the benefits and why it is worth the cost. Consider all sensible offers but don't agree to a condition too quickly - this can make the buyer think you are desperate and that there could be more room for manoeuvre. If the negotiations break down, outline the sticking point and your final offer to resolve it. If this still doesn't work, it may be best to thank them for their time and agree to keep in touch.

FOLLOWING UP THE SALE

Once the negotiations are over and the order has been signed, make sure that you continue your professional approach by taking the client through the next steps - called **consolidation**. Remember to thank them for their business before you go any further. Confirm what has been agreed, including delivery dates and times as well as payment procedures, where appropriate. If necessary, write down a schedule of the next steps for them, as well as clear contact details in case they have any queries during the process. It is preferable to give the client your cell phone number to avoid a long delay in answering any query they may have. Sometimes a client may suffer "buyer's remorse" - a negative response to making a big decision - and failing to answer a query quickly and efficiently could lead them to cancel the whole order.

Once back at the office, confirm all the details in an email or letter. Avoid using standard templates for this communication - you need to maintain the friendly rapport generated in the meeting, and a standardised letter could appear too clinical. Follow this up with a regular call at key stages to keep them informed as to progress, and once again after they have taken delivery. Check that they have received exactly what was agreed and on time. Be on hand to answer any queries once the client starts to use the product, perhaps offering to demonstrate it at their workplace.

BUILDING THE CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

Once you have fulfilled the client order, it could be tempting to think of this as the end of the sales process. However, it can be very rewarding to build on this initial order and establish a mutually beneficial client relationship. You should arrange a further meeting to discuss future business at the earliest possible opportunity. Building relationships takes time and is based on trust. The ultimate aim of your approach should be to create a relationship whereby the client refers to you for consultation on certain matters. This relies on honest advice, but you should always be ready to spot an opportunity to sell your products or services where appropriate. For example, you might advise your client to buy a cheaper product if this will satisfy their requirements, instead of trying to push them to buy the most expensive version. They will start to respect your advice and be willing to discuss bigger orders in future.

Request feedback

Another way of establishing a good working relationship is to request honest feedback. Once you have fulfilled your first order, ask the client if they would complete a short feedback form. It could be more helpful to ask the client's staff to complete certain sections, as it is likely that they will be the ones who actually use the product in practice. Send them a small gift to thank them for their time and ensure that you inform them of any measures you are taking to improve their experience for the future. Adopting this approach will be extremely helpful in tailoring your product or service to your client's needs and will show that you really care about their business. You can also use the feedback to alter your product or service before approaching other customers.

Increase your knowledge of the market

You should build on the research you conducted before visiting the client about their industry and the issues that affect them. Consult their trade press about forthcoming changes in the marketplace and ask them what steps they are taking to prepare their business. It is possible that the client may not have had the time or resources to monitor such developments and they will be very grateful if you help them exploit any opportunities.

REFERRALS AND TESTIMONIALS

Using referrals can reduce the amount of advertising and cold-calling you need to do, while testimonials can help you to convert more prospects into solid orders at sales appointments.

Referrals

Referrals are an extremely good source of new business and can provide an alternative prize if you don't manage to close the sale. Discussing referrals after a sales meeting has been unsuccessful can also provide a welcome change of topic and avoids an awkward end to the proceedings.

You should also ask for referrals when you:

- are sourcing leads
- have just agreed on a deal with a new client
- are at a networking event
- are contacting an existing client

There are various ways of asking for a referral, but you should start by asking for a straightforward introduction or for their contact details. As a last resort you could ask the contact to pass on your details, but this can be less fruitful as they will never sell your product or service in the way that you can.

You should treat referrals in the same way that you do new leads, by following it up straight away. Make sure that you mention who has passed on their details (if they have given their permission)..

Testimonials

Where you are approaching an existing client, you should ask them to provide a written testimonial that you can use in your future sales appointments. Reassure the client that it won't take up too much of their time and that you will only use the details that they are

happy to give you about their business. Ideally, ask for a photo of the client and use quoted speech to personalise the testimonial. Make sure that you ask them to comment on:

- why they used your business
- what problems it helped them to solve
- the level of service they received

Recognizing Buying Signals Will Help You Close More Deals!

A customer will give a buying signal in every interaction sometimes it's a pat on their rear to feel for their wallet. Other times it's saying something like 'that's a great price' or 'does it come in a different color?'



Some examples of PROVEN Buying Signals are...

- Reading the fine print
- Taking a step back and just staring (as in thinking a lot about it)
- Calling a friend or family member on the phone to talk about the product (looking for someone to Jones Effect them)
- Asking about financing options
- Comes back multiple times
- Contacts you multiple times with questions
- Asking questions about you (they are trying to relate to you better so they are more at ease with their purchase)

Receiving and recognizing buying signals is a skill very few sales reps or business owners do correctly. But they must be capitalized on in order to increase your revenue and paycheck.

A great sales person will always be on the lookout for the dozens of signs a customer will give them just like a great coach is always looking at the other team to find what player is weak for that game. As you receive buying signals make sure you mentally file them away in order to use them as you near the closing step to the sale.

You can also use them to transition into the close especially if the sales process has been ongoing for a long time. If a person is checking their purse to see if their wallet is there use that to break their hesitation to pull the trigger. Make a little joke like 'don't worry ma'am, no need to tip me for my advice.' This breaks the tension.

Recognizing Buying Signals will help you close more deals!

9 Buying Signals To Watch Out For

When a sales prospect has decided that they will make a purchase, they will often express their desire to do so ever so subtly. A change in the tone of speech, bodily movements, the way they look at you, a good salesperson must be able to recognize subtle **buying signals to know** when to start the conversation that would lead to a closed sale. Most prospects tend to be undecided but ask certain questions that hint interest in your products or services. These may mean that they just need a little nudge in the right direction for them to make the purchase.

To help you close as many sales as possible, here are nine things that translate to buying signals that you should **watch out for** on your next appointment with your prospects:

1. Asking about a specific product, product model, or type of service

Questions like "does this come in another color/style?" or "how about if my problem is like this...?" indicate a prospect's interest in how your company can answer his greatest need.

2. Asking for the warranty

When a customer asks for the warranty, he is trying to assure himself of the reliability of your product or service and is probably close to becoming a buyer.

3. Asking about the start of service or delivery date

These types of questions may indicate that your customer has already decided that your company is the best choice and is probably eager to finish the sale. A good sales reply would be “when do you need it?”.

4. Asking about the contract

When the customer starts asking about the terms and conditions of the contract, or asks if he can alter parts of it to accommodate himself, he is likely ready to make the purchase.

5. Asking about the price

A customer will only voluntarily include the topic of pricing into your conversation if he has developed an interest in purchasing.

6. Asking for the mode of payment

When the customer asks you questions like the terms and mode of payment, chances are they are already thinking of buying your offer. As stated above, anytime a customer brings in the topic of money into the conversation, it's safe to think that they are interested in buying.

7. Asking about your company

A customer asking about how long your company has been in service or if you've had transactions with other businesses in their area likely indicate that he wants to check the reliability of your company

8. Asking to repeat

When a customer asks you to repeat a part or parts of your conversation, such as “what does the warranty cover again?”, “can you go over that payment structure again?” or “are you sure this will work for me...?”, most likely he wants to reaffirm something you said earlier that he particularly liked or he wants to assure himself that he is making the right decision by buying from you.

9. Asking the magic words

The moment your customer asks you “what do we do next?”, in all probability it means that you have already closed the sale.

Any salesperson who fails to interpret these questions will only be a dead weight to your **sales and marketing team**. Other than these, you and your agents must also be able to read nonverbal cues from your prospects like participating in your presentation, taking

a look into a limited range of products, holding your product, open hands, leaning forward as you speak, and other minute body languages all signify interest. Always be on the lookout for these.