

**A sample activity from the
Fenman trainer's resource:**

Selling Through Customer Service

Written by Tony Gillen

Thank you for downloading this sample activity.
You are welcome to use this material in your
courses.

This sample activity is just one of 19 contained
in the trainer's activity pack 'Selling through
Customer Service', published by Fenman.
Details of the other activities are given at the
end of this document.

Selling through Customer Service

Contents:

Introduction

Activity 2: Effective customer care demands a positive sales attitude

About this resource

Full contents listing: 19 activities

Introduction:

With these 19 activities you can get people to really enjoy selling - even if they don't think it's part of their job. All too often, customer-facing staff fail to make that vital link between their skills and increased sales. This pack shows them how to do it.

Whether your customer service staff work face-to-face or over the telephone, you can enhance performance by focusing on ways to help the customer want to buy. The activities in this pack are practical and involve participants by focusing on real customer contacts.

Learning applications include:

- rapport building
- dealing with objections
- understanding the buying process
- initiating sales conversations
- looking for opportunities to sell
- making outbound calls
- taking inbound calls

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ACTIVITY 2

EFFECTIVE

CUSTOMER CARE

DEMANDS A

POSITIVE SALES

ATTITUDE

INTRODUCTION

This activity is a mix of whole group work, syndicate discussion and individual activity.

Good customer care is the basis of increased sales. Regular customers use their past experience of counter and telephone staff actions and attitudes as part of their decision to buy (or not to buy) more from those same staff.

Customers also need the opportunity to buy presented to them in a professional and customer-friendly way.

Customers, therefore, buy more than the products or services on offer – they also buy (or reject) staff attitudes and service levels.

Counter and telephone staff must be aware of this and also of their own attitudes if they are to contribute to increased sales.

PURPOSE

To enable participants to be clear about what customers buy. To help participants to assess their own attitudes and skills with regard to encouraging customers to buy. To give participants the opportunity to change or improve.

APPLICATION

You can use this activity with all customer contact staff.

WHAT HAPPENS

Set the scene by stating that staff attitudes, knowledge and skills all have an impact on sales. Participants then explore four scenarios where buyers are encouraged to buy, or discouraged from buying more, because of staff behaviour. None of the four scenarios includes offhand, rude, bored or uninterested staff. Even seemingly pleasant staff can have an adverse impact on sales.

The scenarios are discussed in a group session and conclusions are drawn about what customers actually buy.

A short brainstorming session brings participants back from scenarios to their own organisation. They are then asked to complete a self-analysis questionnaire on how they think their customers would rate them. Without anyone having to announce their own scores, the issues raised by the questionnaire are discussed so that participants can decide where to focus in order to improve.

TIME

Overall time required: 2 hours.

- Briefing and introduction: 10 minutes
- What customers buy: 45 minutes
- Your buyer rating: 50 minutes
- Summary: 15 minutes

MATERIALS & RESOURCES

- 3 OHT masters:
 - 2.1 *Session objectives*
 - 2.2 *Customers buy from ...*
 - 2.3 *Why customers buy from competitors*
- 2 Handout masters:
 - 2.4 *What customers buy*
 - 2.5 *Your buyer rating*
- Overhead projector and screen
- Flipchart
- Felt-tip pens
- Pens and paper for each participant

IN PREPARATION

Familiarise yourself with the activity content. Have available recent customer survey or mystery shopper results which indicate how well customers perceive both service and sales levels so you can

HOW DO I DO IT?

add specific detail to participants' opinions. Mystery shopper exercises are surveys of staff actions, behaviour and so on carried out by researchers acting as customers.

BRIEFING AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome the participants and tell them that this session is all about their approach to sales and how it can affect customer buying decisions – for better or worse.



Show OHT 2.1
Session objectives

Tell the participants that:

'Customers can buy [name your main product or service, – for example, a car, drill, meal, hotel room] anywhere. But if they go somewhere else for it they won't get *you*. You are part of the package. And, as I say to my customers, "If you aren't sure I make a difference – try me." This session is about knowing what difference you make.'

A sentence like this shouts a commitment to excellence and a commitment to serving the customer well. It shows customers what your attitude is. To be able to deliver on this sentence you *must* have the appropriate knowledge and skills.

You might want to ask participants what knowledge and skills they think are needed. List suggestions on a flipchart, for example:

- each product
- what each product does
- prices
- product comparisons
- company procedures
- customer service standards
- sales skills
- after-sales skills.

WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY

Tell the group they will work in syndicates to explore what customers buy.



Distribute Handout 2.4

What customers buy

Divide participants into groups of three or four. Tell them they have 20 minutes to complete the exercise.

During this time visit each syndicate to check their progress. Confirm that the answers they give to the questions are appropriate and continually ask:

- What else does this customer want?
- What else could the staff have done?
- What effect would that have had?

After 20 minutes reconvene the whole group. Ask each syndicate group in turn to:

- give an overview of the scenario
- answer each question.

Write appropriate points on the flipchart for subsequent permanent display. Ask for suggestions from others to check different perspectives.

Some suggestions you might want to use are as follows:

Scenario 1: *The tracksuit*

1. Ms Smith wanted:

- a replacement tracksuit
- to feel good about getting a replacement
- to find an outfitter who could supply other needs (for example, racquet, balls, other clothing, 'how to play' books)
- a convenient transaction.

2. How well ...

- the assistant did almost all she could in the circumstances
- she could have offered to check the delivery and phone Ms Smith
- she could have discussed Ms Smith's sport to improve the relationship and provide additional sales opportunities to satisfy future needs.

Scenario 2: The flight

1. Mr Singh wanted:

- air transport
- to feel safe and reassured
- convenience
- to feel comfortable about taking up the airline staff's time for his own needs
- to enjoy the journey.

2. How well ...

- The airline has a strong customer care policy. Staff are trained to be proactive in treating passengers as individuals with unique needs. You get the impression that all Mr Singh's needs would be met.

Scenario 3: The new account

1. Ms Kelly wanted:

- to find a 'home' for her money
- to be respected for who she is
- to have her unique situation recognised and respected
- to be cared for by people who look beyond the size of the cheque and see the *person*.

2. How well ...

- the assistant was cheerful and welcoming but shallow
- she should have asked questions such as:
 - 'How did you come by the amount? That sometimes helps us to advise on how to invest it.'

- ‘How important is it to you that we are the kind of building society you want to put your money in?’
- she could have had the conversation in an interview room to provide comfort and privacy.

Scenario 4: The electric drill

1. Ms McNab wanted:

- a drill and accessories
- advice
- to feel comfortable as a DIY novice
- somewhere she could return to when she wanted more items, further advice and so on.

2. How well ...

- the assistant empathised and used examples to help explain things to a novice
- he made suggestions and offered alternatives
- he sounded like Ms McNab could trust him.

After all scenarios have been reviewed you should have a list of what customers buy:

- the product or service offered by the company
- courtesy, empathy, help, advice, product-knowledge
- customer-friendly company policies, and so on.

The staff in the scenarios also showed varying levels of customer care, regardless of how much they tried. No one in the scenarios was bored or offhand but the sports outfitter and building society assistants delivered lower-quality care than the airline and DIY staff.



Show OHT 2.2

Customers buy from ...

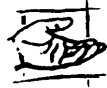
Introduce a quick brainstorming session: What do our customers buy from us?

Get the participants to call out what they *personally* or their colleagues actually do to encourage customers to buy.

Cover a flipchart page with words and phrases. Display the page on the wall.

YOUR BUYER RATING

Tell the group that the individual assistants in the scenarios had an impact on the customers' attitudes. The brainstorming session will have produced many reasons for customers to buy. Now let us formalise them with a self-assessment questionnaire.



Distribute Handout 2.5

Your buyer rating

Ask each participant to complete the questionnaire. Tell them to be honest with themselves. No one else will see their responses and they will not be asked to share their thoughts unless they want to. Allow 15 minutes for them to complete the questionnaire and think about the final three questions.

When all participants have finished, remind them that they don't need to share any of their scores but that you would like to discuss the final three unnumbered questions on Handout 2.5.

Use the flipchart to record opinions.

With regard to the first of the unnumbered questions, ask:

- What makes them so important?
- How do high and low scores impact on sales?
- What could the company do to help individuals become perfect?
- What could you do yourself?

Make a note of suggestions on the flipchart.

Go on to the second question (how are low scores the company's fault?) or ask how company policy or procedures cause individuals to score themselves low. Ask:

- If the company changed, how would it enable you to score yourself higher?
- What effect would a higher score have on sales?

Participants often pass comments that:

- aren't really down to the company at all, therefore they could be worked on without changing company policy
- deal with deeply embedded issues that won't change quickly – so how can people best live with them and still find ways to improve? Some participants will already have addressed issues that are still a problem for others. Ask for their suggestions.

Finally, ask for a show of hands on which five issues participants consider to be the most important to achieving a higher buyer rating.

Confirm that the group sees the definite link between good customer care and higher sales.



Show OHT 2.3

Why customers buy from competitors

This OHT will reinforce the point. It comes from a survey of customers published in the USA and UK which asked what prompted them to buy from a competitor instead of their usual place of purchase.

Allow a moment for participants to read the OHT and say, 'Poor service and lack of interest accounted for 83 per cent of customers' decisions to buy elsewhere'.

SUMMARY

As a final summary use the 83 per cent statistic to remind participants of your opening statement. Customers can buy tracksuits, airline tickets, electric drills, and [our products] anywhere – we *have* to make the difference.

Refer to the results of the brainstorming session and the list of what customers buy in addition to the basic product. Each participant focused on their own buyer rating and knows what they score well on, what their low scores are and where they want to improve.

Ask each participant to state:

- one thing they learned during the session that they will use to allocate a higher score in *one week*, and
- one thing they will use to allocate a higher score in *one month*.

Thank the participants and close the session.

SESSION OBJECTIVES



2.1

- 1. To clarify for yourselves what it is that your customers buy from you.**
- 2. To help you assess your own buyer rating.**
- 3. To confirm the importance of good customer care to high sales.**



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CUSTOMERS BUY FROM ...



2.2

2

People they know
People they trust
People they respect
People they feel comfortable
with

In short:

People buy from people who
deserve their business



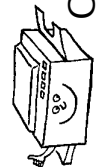
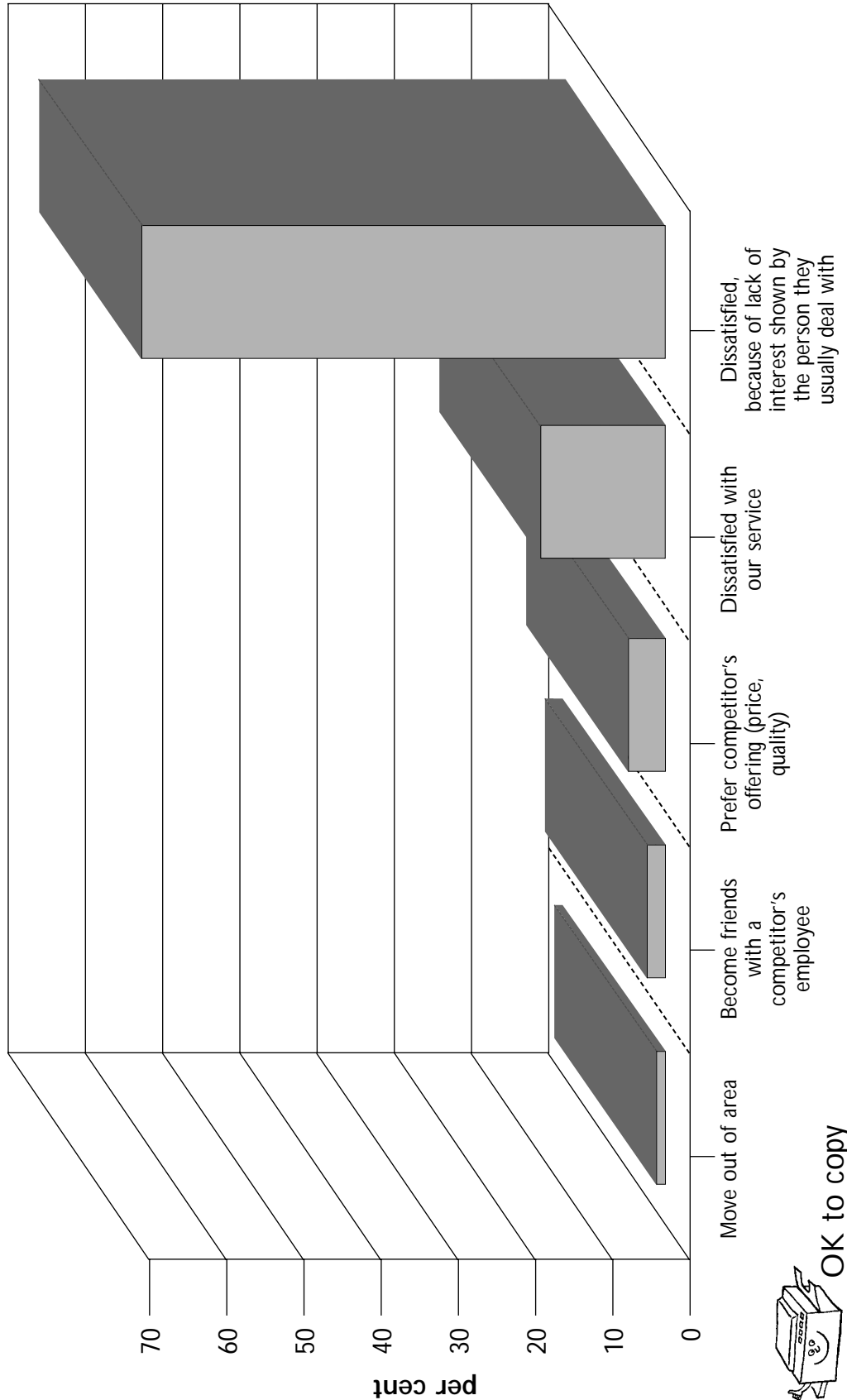
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REASONS CUSTOMERS BUY FROM COMPETITORS



2.3

REASONS CUSTOMERS BUY FROM COMPETITORS



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WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY



2.4

In your syndicate group:

1. read each scenario
2. note down what the customer wanted
3. comment how well the customer got what they wanted
4. record, if you were the customer, how likely you would be to choose to return to spend more money.

You have 20 minutes to complete the task.

Please be ready to comment on your work and to discuss your comments with your colleagues in the whole group session.

SCENARIO 1: THE TRACKSUIT

A couple of weeks ago Ms Smith bought a tracksuit from a sports outfitter in her local shopping centre. She wore it a few times as she has just taken up squash. She borrows one of her playing opponent's racquets. She'll buy her own when she's used to the game.

She washed the tracksuit according to the instructions on the label but when it came out of the machine it had both stretched and become misshapen.

Ms Smith returns it to the store.

'Good afternoon, I bought this a couple of weeks ago,' she says to a young assistant as she places the garment on the counter, 'washed it and now it's ruined.'

'Oh dear,' says the assistant, 'I am sorry to hear that. Can I see the receipt please?'

'I only have my credit card receipt. I've mislaid the till receipt.'

'Oh,' says the assistant, 'I'm really sorry but I do need our till receipt to do a replacement. Let me speak to my manager.'



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Continued ...

WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY



... continued

2.4

The assistant left the counter and returned after three or four minutes to say, 'Well we're not supposed to, but my manager says this time we'll exchange it, but in future you'll have to have the proper till receipt.'

After checking the rack there was no tracksuit in stock with the same coloured flash on the shoulder. The assistant pointed out that they would have a new delivery next week and she could pop back to see if there was one in she wanted. Ms Smith took a credit note, thanked the assistant and left.

1. What did Ms Smith want?
2. How well did the assistant satisfy Ms Smith's needs?
3. How likely would you be to spend more money in this store?

SCENARIO 2: THE FLIGHT

Mr Singh is a pensioner who wants to visit his son who now lives abroad. He hasn't been on an aeroplane in over 30 years and is, therefore, a little anxious about things.

At the check-in desk the clerk notices Mr Singh's nervousness and so explains in detail about the ticket, luggage receipt and boarding card. He then says, 'Mr Singh, if you'd like me to I can arrange for someone to collect you and take you to the gate where you board the aeroplane. Just wait over in those seats and I'll have a colleague collect you.'



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continued ...

WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY



... continued

2.4

Mr Singh waits and, in 15 minutes, is riding along on an electric cart through the terminal.

When he boards the plane, one of the cabin crew takes him to his seat and explains how to use the seat belt, the call button, and so on. She also tells him what will happen between now and take-off. She then says she will come back after take-off to make sure he's comfortable and to explain how to recline the seat and so on.

1. What did Mr Singh want?
2. How well did the airline staff satisfy Mr Singh's needs?
3. How likely would you be to spend more money with this airline?

SCENARIO 3: THE NEW ACCOUNT

Ms Kelly goes into a building society branch of which she is not a member. She was awarded £30,000 compensation for a car accident that happened two years ago. She has fully recovered but still remembers the pain, distress and disruption to her life. She wants to deposit the money with an organisation she feels comfortable with, one which she can trust, where staff will treat her and her money with care.

'Good morning,' says a smiling counter assistant. 'What can I do for you today?'

'Well,' says Ms Kelly, 'I'm considering opening an account. I'm not a customer at the moment.'



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continued ...

WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY



... continued

2.4

'Oh, that's OK,' says the assistant cheerfully, 'we have a campaign on at present to recruit new customers. I'd be delighted to help. How much are you thinking of depositing?'

'£30,000,' replies Ms Kelly, 'but I'm still thinking about it.'

'Wow,' says the assistant, 'win the Lottery eh? Lucky you!'

'Not exactly,' responds Ms Kelly.

'Well, anyway, the most important thing is how much interest you'll get. You want your money to work for you don't you?'

'Well yes, I suppose so. Have you got a leaflet I could take away with me to study?'

'Yes several. Let me get them ... OK, this is a high-interest instant-access account, this one is better interest with 90 days' notice and this is the best but it's a bond and you'd have to tie up your money for two years ...'

'Thank you,' says Ms Kelly, 'I'll study them and let you know.'

'OK' chirps the assistant, 'Bye.'

1. What did Ms Kelly want?

2. How well did the counter assistant satisfy Ms Kelly's needs?



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continued ...

WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY



... continued

2.4

3. How likely would you be to invest, borrow, buy insurance and save with this building society?

2

SCENARIO 4: THE ELECTRIC DRILL

Ms McNab has just bought a small townhouse and has decided it needs some attention. She goes into her local DIY store and asks for some advice on drills.

'We have several styles of drill' says the assistant. 'Is this your first drill purchase or are you familiar with our products?'

'No,' says Ms McNab, 'I've never bought one before; that's why I want some advice.'

'Sure, let me start from scratch. I believe you should buy a drill according to three principles – how much you'll use it, what kind of walls and things you'll be drilling holes in and whereabouts the holes will be.'

'What do you mean?' asks the customer.

'Let me explain – this drill here is a real heavy-duty unit. It'll last for years, even on a building site. But it's cable only, no batteries, and it's heavy. I wouldn't like to drill holes in a ceiling with it. You see what I mean?'

'Yes,' says Ms McNab, 'I'm not sure what I want really but I've just moved and want to put up shelves and things like that.'

'No problem – this is a good, all-round household drill. I've got one and so has my dad. It's got three speeds so it goes through wood, brick and even metal. It reverses so you can unscrew screws. The battery pack



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continued ...

WHAT CUSTOMERS BUY



... continued

2.4

means you can use it anywhere. And I think it's nicely balanced so you can hold it easily – even with one hand!

'I'll take it,' she says.

'Good, now what about drill bits? And did you say shelves – have you thought about ... ?'

1. What did Ms McNab want?
2. In what aspects did the assistant satisfy Ms McNab's needs?
3. How likely would you be to spend more money in this store?



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YOUR BUYER RATING



2.5

All customers, when they deal with you, want to feel that they matter, that you are an expert and are on their side. In short, they want their money's worth.

If your customers were to give you a 'buyer rating', based on how well you serve them as buyers, what scores would they give you?

Read the items on the list and mark the boxes accordingly.

	LOW			HIGH	
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I know my products/services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I explain product features in simple terms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I know company procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I explain procedures in simple terms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I am courteous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am friendly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I am sincere when explaining things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I welcome customer comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I enjoy solving customer problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Customers are people not just transactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Customers know they matter to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I treat customers with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I give customers my full attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. I take control of customers' problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I can calm customers who are upset	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Customers feel reassured when they deal with me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Continued ...

YOUR BUYER RATING



... continued

2.5

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 17. I use customers' names | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Customers trust me | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. Customers know I am always businesslike | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. I keep customers informed about progress on issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. I keep my promises to customers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Good service and good selling go hand in hand | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. I stamp my personality on my job | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. My job is to sell, support, advise and fix | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25. Customers like me to serve them | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26. Customers want to buy from me | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Now check back over your scores.

Which high scores did you give yourself that you think are the most important?

Which low scores are the company's fault rather than yours?

Which five issues would you like to score higher on?



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ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource has one purpose: to enable and encourage all customer contact staff to achieve, or contribute to, higher sales.

The goal of all organisations is to succeed as businesses. Customer contact staff – such as salespeople and support staff – who sell effectively whilst delivering a high level of customer care will contribute significantly to this goal. This resource is designed to be of value to all customer contact staff, no matter what their level of skill or what their attitude to selling might be.

The activities in this resource address both of the above issues. Inexperienced or less successful staff will benefit enormously from the simple, practical sales processes they will learn. The more successful staff will also learn from the material. They will refine their current skill level and gain an additional benefit – that of being able to confirm that what they do now is what they should be doing.

The sales skills and strategies you will find in the resource are as powerful to use as they are simple to learn. They also take into account that some customer contact staff have negative sales attitudes. These need to be addressed if skills are to be learned and applied. There is an activity aimed specifically at addressing this attitude but, where appropriate – based on the author's experience – attitude and motivation are looked at within other activities. Just by reading the *Contents* pages you will see quickly how valuable this resource can be.

Tony Gillen, the author of this resource, has been in selling since 1970. As a new salesman he observed his successful colleagues, read everything to do with selling he could find and attended sales course after sales course. Over the years, he applied the skills in different ways. He dumped a lot of 'textbook' approaches because they were too cumbersome and even counter-productive. He reapplied much of what he learned and became a successful salesperson and then sales manager.

He has worked as both a consultant and sales trainer to many organisations in many lines of business. In these roles he was able to train client staff and then monitor their performance. Where necessary, he modified and reapplied his skill sets.

Some of what you will find in the resource will be new, some will be standard sales practice: it will enable all sales people to do what good

sales people have always done! The author has used all of the appropriate sales training material as a basis for this resource. The original material has been generalised, where necessary, so it can be applied to any training event.

The examples, sample scenarios and so on you will see in each activity are general enough to be recognised by any participant whilst, on occasion, being totally specific to participants who work for car dealerships, DIY stores, banks and so on.

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2. Effective customer care demands a positive sales attitude

Customers buy products, staff attitudes and service level. How do you measure up?

3. Preparing to sell

Knowing all our USPs (unique sales propositions) so they can be applied to customer needs.

4. Who buys what, and why

Selling to existing customers, the benefits on offer, looking for new sales opportunities.

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How to look for and recognise the 'triggers' in customers' lives that make them open to what's on offer.

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The five steps customers go through in their own minds in order to make a buying decision. Knowing the steps and helping customers to follow them.

10. Initiating a sales conversation

The first few seconds and what to say to customers to ensure the buying experience gets off to a good start.

11. Customer resistance

What is it about the 'store' and the people in it that makes customers resistant to buying? What to do to minimise the resistance.

12. When customers object

The eight main reasons customers raise objections. What they tell you about a customer's thoughts. How this reflects participants' selling ability.

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Seeing objections for what they are. Dealing with them so the sale stays on track and the relationship stays intact.

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