

# **Advanced Selling Skills: Outside Sales**



Freightliner LLC

The material within the *Advanced Selling Skills: Outside Sales* module is for Freightliner LLC instructional purposes only.

Reference to an “authorized” dealer signifies a dealer under contract with Freightliner LLC via signed dealer agreement.

---

## A Sales Fable

*Once, there was a new Outside Salesperson named Mr. Smith who had studied basic sales training with great zeal. He knew how to research and define potential markets. He planned his sales calls, and was able to arrange meetings with buyers in key prospect organizations. He monitored his progress regularly. He studied his product lines, and before long he knew the important features and advantages of almost every item he sold. Mr. Smith was really pleased with himself.*

*Initially, Mr. Smith had pretty good success, considering he was new. He became convinced that he had mastered the ability to sell parts, and continued to apply his sales method with each new prospect that he met.*

*A few months later, sales reports started to show a slow but steady decline in the sales volume achieved by Mr. Smith. He began trying to apply his methods even harder, but with little success. Potential customers remained polite, but never seemed to want to commit to an order. Mr. Smith's competitors began to make steady inroads into his accounts.*

*One day, Mr. Smith got up and looked into the mirror. He saw a haggard and worried face looking back at him. "I guess this is not as easy as it looks," he muttered.*

### **What Is the Lesson (or Lessons) of This Fable?**

- ☐ The same approach to selling doesn't work for everybody.
- ☐ Everyone needs to be willing to try new ideas to succeed.
- ☐ Basic selling skills are not always enough—continual growth is necessary.
- ☐ Selling is a skill that takes dedication to master.

*Now, turn to the next page for more...*

## Introduction

What did you choose as the lesson or lessons of the fable you just read?

### ***The Same Approach to Selling Doesn't Work for Everybody.***

Mr. Smith had honed a specific approach to selling parts. It worked initially, which led him to believe he had found the answer to successful selling. But his early success might have been just good luck. Over time, he found that the tool set he was using didn't achieve the results he wanted. So a reasonable conclusion, and a good lesson, is that different prospects require different approaches. The good news is that the differences are usually minor; they are subtleties and nuances of the basic set of skills.

### ***Everyone Needs to Be Willing to Try New Ideas to Succeed.***

Mr. Smith didn't seem willing to adjust his approach to selling, even when it was obviously not working as well as he hoped it would. So another good lesson is that everyone needs to be willing to try new ideas to succeed. But it's not about trying one thing on a prospect, and then doing something else when that doesn't work. Usually by then, it's too late. This fable really suggests that we have to reexamine old beliefs about selling, discarding the things that don't work, and learning about new things that do work.

### ***Basic Selling Skills Are Not Always Enough—Continual Growth Is Necessary.***

After Mr. Smith looked into the mirror and told himself that it wasn't "as easy as it looks" he hopefully next realized that the cause of his problems was that he was applying a few basic skills to all of the situations he encountered. An old proverb says, "When all you have is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail." Mr. Smith needs to view his mastery of selling skills as a journey, not a destination. It's a process of lifelong learning, if for no other reason than the environments in which we sell are constantly changing.

### ***Selling Is a Skill That Takes Dedication to Master.***

Selling is not an art. We're not born to do it well. It is a skill like any other. Unlike some skills we might master, this one requires dedication, the ability to shake off rejection, and the courage to keep going. That's what this course is all about. If you chose this as a lesson of the fable, tighten your seatbelt and hang on! We're going to try to prove that you've got it in you!

#### **What Do You Believe?**

Try the exercise found in Appendix 1 of this course to check your fundamental beliefs about the function of selling. Then, decide how you might want to think differently about selling and your role in it.

## About This Training

This course is part of the *PartsExpert* professional level of curriculum. It follows the course titled *Selling Skills*, which is a prerequisite. If you haven't completed *Selling Skills*, you should do so before continuing with this course.

In this course, you will learn specific skills that will help you achieve better sales results. The skills cover things you should do before the sales process, during the sales process, and after the sales process. It builds upon the skills you learned in *Selling Skills* (part of the certified level curriculum).

## Who Can Benefit From This Course?

The intended audience for this course is Outside Parts Salespeople. These skills are oriented toward interactions with larger purchasers.

Parts Managers will also find this information helpful. They have an opportunity to support the Outside Parts Salesperson plan and manage sales activities.

## Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to:

- Set objectives and develop plans for finding and reaching new contacts.
- Describe several strategies for entering new businesses.
- Create an environment that is most conducive to buying.
- Effectively prevent objections and counter your vulnerabilities.
- Create buyer action.
- Develop effective account assessments and strategic plans.

## How You Will Learn

The primary method of learning will be by reading this course material. You should apply your personal selling experiences to put this material in a context that is most useful to you. There will be exercises, and the final Certification Test. The answers to all of the certification questions at the end of this module are readily found within its contents.

When you have completed the course, feel free to talk to others in your dealership who have also done so, or to people who you think demonstrate great selling skills. Ask them what they do to make their selling efforts successful, and adopt those things that work for you.

## Looking Back—Looking Forward

Let's take a very quick look back at the six steps that were introduced in *Selling Skills*, the prerequisite for this course. A review will clarify how this course builds on that material.

### Looking Back at the Six Steps of “Selling Skills”

#### ***Acknowledge the Customer***

This step includes the ability to maintain an attitude that people find positive. Look professional and approach the customer professionally. Recognize that the customer has needs, that it is your job to determine the needs, and to show how your products can support those needs.

Take cues from the customer to determine the appropriate level of familiarity, and alter your style to accommodate the relaxed, angry, demanding, or uncertain customer. Relate in a way that matches the general behavioral style of the customer. For example, get right to the point with the *Driver*, but take your time with and provide details to the *Analytical* buyer.

#### ***Listen***

Listening seems like a simple skill. We do it all the time, and rarely if ever think about it as a skill. Build rapport by eliminating distractions and focusing solely on the customer. Listen more than you talk. Don't interrupt.

#### ***Ask Questions***

The ability to make the best recommendation to the customer is based on the ability to find out exactly what the customer needs and wants—through effective questioning. Ask open-ended questions to get more comprehensive answers; ask closed-ended questions to control the conversation.

#### ***Present Features Through Benefits***

Many products have great features that are of no interest to some buyers. An automobile with a feature of a 400 horsepower engine may interest some buyers, but certainly not all. Effective questioning helps you determine what the buyer is really interested in—what are benefits to him or her. It might be price, reliability, availability, or warranty, for example. Then you can present the features of your product that show the buyer you can meet those needs.

#### ***Respond to Objections***

Objections are really a request for more information. After all, you haven't yet been shown the door. Practice self-management, and respond in a way that uses the objection as a selling tool. Better yet, use the other skills above to prevent objections in the first place.

## Close the Sale

The sale won't happen unless you ask for it, *at the right time and every time*.

## Looking Forward to “Advanced Selling Skills”

The principles expressed in the six steps of the *Selling Skills* process are invaluable, but our fable showed that they might not always be enough. This course will extend what you learned in *Selling Skills* in the following way.

	<b><i>Selling Skills</i></b>	<b><i>Advanced Selling Skills: Outside Sales</i></b>
<b>Before the Sales Call</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting and researching new prospects, building a territory</li> <li>• Lead sourcing</li> <li>• Mission and objectives—setting goals for yourself</li> <li>• Developing prospects’ “business concepts”</li> <li>• Contact planning</li> <li>• Getting in to new prospects, entry strategies</li> <li>• Getting to the “right people”</li> </ul>
<b>During the Sales Call</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge the Customer</li> <li>• Listen</li> <li>• Ask Questions</li> <li>• Present Features Through Benefits</li> <li>• Respond to Objections</li> <li>• Close the Sale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a buyer’s “hidden agenda”</li> <li>• Advanced questioning techniques</li> <li>• Using the verbal and nonverbal language of the buyer to build instant rapport</li> <li>• Countering your vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Differentiating yourself from your competitors</li> <li>• Advanced concepts in closing the sale</li> <li>• Getting a buyer to act</li> </ul>
<b>After the Sales Call</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing your accounts</li> <li>• Influencing the decisions made by your accounts</li> <li>• Account development strategies</li> </ul>

## What Is Selling?

Nothing ever happens in business (or life itself!) without someone selling something. You might want to “sell” the bank on your creditworthiness for a loan. You might have a great idea that your manager needs to be “sold on.” Selling generates results. And in all of your sales transactions, a sale is *always* made. Either you sell the buyer on “yes” or the buyer sells you on “no.”

Some people think that selling is an art—that some people are “born into it.” That’s just not true. The skill of selling is a repeatable set of words, phrases, and techniques that convince a prospect to buy from you. As such, it’s a science.

Selling is **not** telling!

- When you *tell* prospects, you have conveyed some information. When you *sell* prospects, you have generated an action.
- When you *tell* prospects, the conversation is focused on **you** and **your** needs. When you *sell* prospects, the conversation is focused on **them** and **their** needs.
- When you *tell* prospects, the results are probably the same as they often are when you *tell* your kids—nothing useful. But when you *sell*, you get results.

### Yes, No, No, Yes, No, No, ...

If you sell everyone you present to, you’re not presenting enough. On average, assume 2 “no’s” for every “yes.” Check with other colleagues who are top performers.

## Why Selling Won’t Get Easier

You may think that, for you, the title of this section isn’t true. Your sales volume may be increasing, and because of your growth in skills and experience you are finding it easier to achieve results. But there are many factors at work that will make the job of selling more challenging over the coming years. Here are two of the most important.

### ***Increasing Competition***

Almost all organizations are facing increased levels of competition, which makes the task of winning and keeping customers more difficult.

- The availability of information on the Internet, coupled with higher quality transportation (parts can move around the country easily over greater distances than ever before) means your customers are finding reasonable choices over a wide geographical area; they’re not “fishing in your lake” exclusively, anymore.
- Shareholders continue to demand better performance. Those profit pressures translate into greater scrutiny on the purchases and supplier alliances that a company makes.
- Poorly performing businesses are being acquired by successful businesses—making them stronger competitors.



### ***Higher Levels of Customer Sophistication***

“Good-old-boy” networks are dying and the importance of long-established business relationships is declining. You are facing fewer but probably more powerful customers in the companies that you approach.

- The role of procurement is becoming more important in larger companies. Part of the reason is that downsizing has led to higher expenditures on capital equipment. These decisions have led to higher level, software-driven purchasing functions. While you might not be selling a lot of high tech gadgetry, you may be facing a more sophisticated, procurement team. Also, more outsourcing has led companies to place a greater value on the quality of purchased goods and services—and on the relationships they have with their suppliers.
- Many companies have made a strategic decision to focus their business on a few of the best suppliers, and are often abandoning the old methods of “throwing the net” out to a large number of potential suppliers.

All of these things directly affect parts sales in the trucking industry. Together, they make the continued growth of your selling skills imperative—a journey instead of a destination.

### **What Does It Take? The 22 Rules**

This program is designed to move you along on your journey toward stronger selling skills. To begin, let's look at 22 Rules of Selling.

#### ***Build a Relationship No Competitor Can Break***

1. Establish long-term relationships. Your best prospects are your current customers. Don't do anything that damages their trust in you. Tell the truth, be sincere, and keep the promises that you make.
2. Gather personal information and use it. The best relationships are those of “friends.” Establish common ground, such as golf or children.
3. Create positive memories of your encounter. Make sure that when you leave, the conversation about you is positive.
4. Spot potential problems or errors and correct them before they threaten your relationship.
5. Sell to help your customers, not to grow your commissions. The commissions will follow.

### ***Don't Get Caught "Selling"—Get Caught "Consulting"***

6. Be prepared for each sales call with your research on the prospect, your plan of approach, your openers, questions, and answers to likely questions.
7. Qualify the buyer; don't waste time on tire kickers.
8. Maintain comprehensive product knowledge.
9. Use your product knowledge, industry experience, and selling ability to probe for customer issues. Then craft meaningful solutions that address those issues.
10. Don't disparage the competition. Instead, find the ways that you can positively differentiate yourself from them.
11. Talk in terms of what the customer wants, needs, and expects, not in terms of what you have to offer. Sell benefits that relate to the customer issues, not just features. Remember that people buy outcomes.
12. People buy for their own reasons and in their own way. Don't just sell the way you would like to be sold. That only works for people just like you.
13. Listen for buying signals and then go for the sale.
14. Get something out of every encounter—if not a sale, at least an invitation to return or talk again.
15. Follow up constantly.

### ***Believe in Yourself***

16. Be positive about your role—have fun.
17. Never stop learning how to sell. Read, listen to tapes, attend seminars, and ask experienced salespeople what they do.
18. Redefine rejection; it's not about you—it's your product or your offer, or just bad timing.
19. Understand that those who have a lot of luck are those who work hard to get it.
20. Accept responsibility for things that don't work as planned
21. Set goals and stick to them. Make at least some progress each day.
22. Create a Personal Mission Statement!

## What About Your Values?

You are the biggest part of the success equation. Your ability to change, to try new ideas, and to discard those that don't work is essential.

The last “rule” in the preceding section was to create a Personal Mission Statement. Having a clear sense of your purpose—why you are in a sales position—can really help you through the daily ups and downs of selling. Mission statements are not goals. They are about *your values*, and clarity of values will help you ensure that your goals are aligned with your underlying values.

Appendix 2 contains a form that you may use to think about and write your own Personal Mission Statement. It gives you a chance to capture your fundamental values, and to write some things that you value about yourself and your capabilities. Writing and remembering these things can help guide your decisions and actions as you sell. Copy it and complete it as fully and honestly as you can. Then, from time to time, return to it and make revisions that make sense to you.

## Setting Your Sights on Prospects

### Current Customers and New Prospects

Current customers are always your best source of additional business. You have a number of important assets with them.

- They know you already. You don't have to start from the beginning. Presumably, they like doing business with you; that's why they're current customers.
- You have established rapport and trust with them. They are confident of your abilities and your products.
- You have a history of service with them—the ability to provide for their needs, and to deliver the right products on time.
- You know a great deal about their business, and how your present products and new products help them achieve their objectives.
- They have shown they are creditworthy.

#### **New Customers Are Expensive!**

Several studies have shown that it takes almost 5 times more money and energy to find a new customer than it does to gain more business with a current customer.

As a result, they will return your calls, and be more receptive to your presentations. In the quest for additional contacts, don't ignore your current customers! Refer to the later section of this course, called "After the Sale," for more ideas on how to cultivate additional business with current customers.

## Lead Sourcing

That said, territories grow faster if new customers can be continually found and cultivated. The trick is to find those prospects that are most likely to have issues you can address successfully. Where can you find good leads?

### ***Territory Analysis – Potential Revenue***

A good place to start is with a comprehensive analysis of your existing territory. From this kind of analysis, you can determine potential new opportunities with your existing business, identify competitor business that you might be able to secure (more later), and look for businesses that don't presently use either you or one of your competitors (again, more later).

A territory analysis doesn't have to be complex, although you might have to do a little research. Appendix 3 shows a chart that may be helpful.

- Identify your top 20 current revenue producers. These 20, by the way, probably produce as much as 80% of your revenue. (About a century ago, an Italian economist named Pareto developed the idea that 20% of the population controlled 80% of the wealth in his day. This "80/20" idea, the Pareto Principle, can be transferred to many situations, including your accounts. This 20% is where you can expect the best results from your efforts.)

You know these accounts, of course. So, identify stretch objectives for each of them, including additional sales of existing products, and additional sales of new products.

- Next, identify the top 20 accounts in your region that are supported by a competitor. A little later, we'll look at ways you can learn more about their businesses. For each, your objective is to determine several ways that you can better meet their needs.
- Finally, identify up to 20 businesses that have a need for your products, but who don't use either you or your competitors. For these, your objective is to identify the reasons they don't buy from you or a competitor, and find ways your support might be more effective. These potential customers might be "niche" business opportunities.

Later in this course, you'll see how to develop a *Contact Plan* for each of these situations.

### ***Leads From Current Customers***

Current customers are a great source of leads; you just have to ask them. Better yet, ask for their endorsement. Arrange for introductions or letters of referral. This approach produces the best leads by far.

## ***Your Competition***

Part of your territory analysis is to identify ways to get into your competitors' business. Don't assume that these opportunities are unavailable to you. There are several reasons why competitor accounts can be a lucrative source of leads. You already know that they are interested in the things you are selling. Your competitors have already qualified them. You need to find an edge—a reason why your services exceed theirs. Even if the parts you have to offer are virtually the same as your competitors, there is one thing you have that they don't—YOU! You're part of the deal. You can bring a fresh perspective, and a higher commitment to meeting the needs of this prospect. Again, part of developing a *Contact Plan* (later in this course) is thinking through those unique things that you have to offer.

## ***Niche Markets***

Consider market segments that are ignored by the larger competitors—the other 80% of the market. While the revenue streams may not be as large, these companies do offer strong potential and are sometimes ignored by sellers who follow the Pareto Principle exclusively. You want to especially look for smaller companies that have demonstrated sustained growth, or who, in your opinion, are positioned for substantial future growth. Get in there and grow with them.

### **A Two-Pronged Approach**

For exponential sales growth, build upon your existing base **and** constantly search for ways to increase it.

## ***Qualified Lists***

You might decide that free or fee-based qualified lists of prospects could work for you. Freightliner LLC provides such lists on a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis through TIP® Access. Another source of this list could be as near as your library's reference section. Explore the Internet. Lists are available from industry associations and trade groups. Trade magazines can provide important leads, from both the articles and from the advertisements. Often, they produce an annual issue that ranks companies in your industry, and provides names and phone numbers of their key people.

Finally, consider the use of mailing lists, obtained through a list broker. These lists can be provided in a variety of formats, and you can specify exactly what criteria the list should meet (industry, company size, geographical area, etc.). But, be careful with the use of such lists. There is a fee, so try the smallest one you can (there is usually a minimum number of contacts required) to see if it works for you.

## ***Media***

Become media savvy. Look for industry trends in appropriate journals and other sources of industry information. Send articles of interest to prospects. If the article suggests a trend that you think you can support, say so. Look at the "Who's News" segments of relevant publications to see who is moving into positions where you might want to cultivate a relationship with them.

## **Networking**

People buy from you partly because they have gotten to know you. So give your new business acquaintances every opportunity to get to know you. Networking is a good way to get to know accounts that are with a competitor. Join a business association, Chamber of Commerce, industry organizations, etc. Networking is simply getting out and putting yourself in a position where you can meet potential leads or people who know potential leads.

Good places to network include industry trade shows, especially if you are selling nationally or to a large geographical area. Even social clubs can work, if you think that there is a reasonable concentration of prospects to be found there. Consider fundraisers and other charity events.

Effective networking requires some abilities in three areas: *Setting Networking Goals*, *Planning*, and *Working the Crowd*.

### **Goals**

Start by deciding that you can really devote the necessary time and energy to networking by answering a few key questions.

- If I don't network presently, why not? What do I think I can accomplish with a concerted and sustained effort of networking?
- How many hours a week can I devote to this?
- What are my first year's goals for networking?
- Who do I know who is really good at networking? Call him or her and get advice.

These questions help you determine your *readiness*.

### Planning

The planning phase is in many ways the most important. It helps you decide which events are worth attending for the purpose of networking, and it gives you something to say to the prospect when you meet him or her.

- Where do I network now, if at all? Has it been effective? If not, is it because the events are ineffective, or do my skills need sharpening?
- Where *should* I network?
- Where do my best customers network? (If you don't know, ask them.)
- What three organizations should I investigate and possibly join?
- For each event, who are the five primary people I really want to meet? Where can I find them?
- For each of the five most important prospects at the event, what is at least one issue that interests him or her?
- Develop an Introductory Statement. Your Introductory Statement is your personal commercial. It should be brief (preferably 15 seconds—no more than 30). Practice it with colleagues and family until it sounds unrehearsed and natural! A good introductory statement includes:
  - Your profession, stated from the perspective of your best current accounts. Not “I’m a salesperson.” Instead, “I help people in your industry solve their parts problems” or something similar.
  - Your expertise, briefly stated, and in a way that ties you into the prospect’s world. “*I’ve been working with companies like yours for over 15 years.*”
  - Some unique quality or ability that sets you apart from the others in your field. “*I’ve found some really interesting ways to deal with the kinds of issues your company faces.*” A table that might help you identify some unique strengths is shown in Appendix 4.

### Working the Crowd

- Show up early.
- Work the room at least twice. Shake hands firmly. Be enthusiastic and positive. Learn the other person’s name by repeating it at least twice. Don’t drink or smoke.
- Once you’ve told the person who you are, ask them what they do. Only then use your Introductory Statement to introduce yourself, your business, and your strengths.
- Try to find some common ground outside of business. Spend a minute or two talking about it.
- Try for an appointment. Your objective is not to sell product, but to build rapport to enable you to sell an appointment. Work toward getting something concrete—mail, a call, or e-mail if not an appointment to meet.



## Goal Setting

### *Why Set Goals?*

When success is achieved, it is almost always because someone has applied hard work toward a clear and specific objective—a goal.

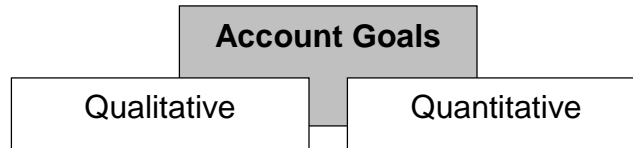
- Goals help you coordinate what you're doing. What? How much of it? With whom?
- Goals increase your efficiency by allowing you to establish priorities for your activities, especially when they are used in conjunction with a good time-management program.
- Goals keep you motivated; you always know where you are and what you have accomplished. They help you keep the goal line in sight at all times.
- Goals prevent sales plateauing by reminding you that your activities toward growth of the business should be continual. As a goal is reached, rewrite it.

### *The Process of Setting and Pursuing Goals*

- Put your goals in writing. Keep them visible at your workplace and even at home. Goals that are written and then “filed away” are rarely achieved.
- Be specific. Don't say, “I'll do better this year.” Say, “I'll do \$300,000 more business this year.”
- Make your goals personally challenging, but attainable. Check them out with family and coworkers.
- Pursue your goals actively. Either take the time to do them, or don't do the exercise in the first place.
- Provide rewards to yourself when you reach milestones. Enjoy your success.
- Update your goals periodically. Write short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals. Adjust the short-term goals most often. But be careful to ensure that your updates are based on sound business reasons. Don't use “updating” as a simple excuse to continually push the expected completion date back.
- Visualize yourself doing the steps necessary to achieve your goals, and then do them.

## Types of Goals

For both current and new accounts, you should have *qualitative* and *quantitative* goals.



Qualitative goals are goals of *position*. They state the position you wish to achieve with the account.

The best qualitative goals are written to state what you want your customers to view as your contribution, *not* how you see your contribution. Let's look at two examples.

- “*To be a reliable sole-source provider of parts,*” might be how **you** see your contribution to a customer.
- “*To be seen as the reliable sole-source provider of parts,*” states the same goal from the **customer's** viewpoint.

The wording difference is more than semantics. By stating your qualitative position goals from the customer's perspective, you're constantly reminded that the customer determines your success and you need to do the things necessary to keep the customer satisfied. These goals are not numerically specific, but they help you keep your focus on the broader context of your desired contribution to your customers.

Quantitative goals are goals of *volume* or *revenue*. Again, state them as what the customer will buy, not as what you will sell. That keeps your mind on what you need to do to get them to reach your desired volumes.

## Two Quantitative Goal Setting Traps

It's difficult to set quantitative goals that are both realistic and that provide reasonable incentive to achieve them. Goal setters often fall into one of these traps.

### The Extrapolator's Trap

Extrapolators do not perform good assessments of accounts and their potential. They simply apply a percentage increase to the results of last year; they extrapolate for the current year. The resulting goals are “exact,” because the math makes them so. But they may not be realistic.

A wide range of things may have happened in the past year to change the customer's business environment—things that will invalidate the extrapolator's methods. There may be major new expenses, new or discontinued business lines, reorganization, or shifting market focus.

Failure to understand and factor in these dynamics that may be operating in your customers' companies will lead to unrealistically high or low sales forecasts.

### **The Creative Goal Setter's Trap**

A forecast is proposed. Then the salesperson starts to think, *"What if I adjust this variable to reflect 1% market growth? Good. Now, let's add 2% growth in margins. Better. Next, let's cut my cost of sales. Great!"* The result may only bear a slight resemblance to reality.

Some experimentation with the numbers is necessary. But carried to extremes, the creative goal setter generates unachievable goals through a series of seemingly harmless adjustments.

### **Contact Plan**

At this point you know who you'll approach, and with what objectives in mind. The last step of planning is how you'll sell yourself and your products once you've gotten in. That's requires the determination of your customer's *business agenda*—his or her objectives that you can help support.

### ***The Right Information Questions***

While you may have already researched the prospect's company, the primary knowledge that you will gain will come from direct questioning. An advanced technique of questioning will be covered later in this course. For now, it's important to think about a series of questions. You may know the answers to some, but not to most. You certainly won't use all of them. At this point, you should pick those that, in your judgment, will provide you with the best understanding of your customer's business agenda. These are all *information* questions; you're going to use them to learn something new or to confirm something you think is true. There are other types of question that we'll cover later, but they aren't used until you have a firm grasp on the prospect's situation, or agenda.

Some information questions are shown in Appendix 5. You may have others.

### ***Planning the Contact***

Once you have selected the questions to gain or confirm the information you believe you need about the prospect, complete a Contact Plan. An example is shown in Appendix 6.

The questions you've selected from Appendix 5 should be part of the Contact Plan of Appendix 6. Combine that plan with the questioning techniques later in this course, and you're ready to meet the prospect.

## An Exercise

Select a prospect company that you want to meet with. Then complete the Contact Plan sheet below.

<b>Contact Plan</b>	Prospective Account	
	Date of Call	
Contact Name		
Contact Title		
Nature of Business		
Objective of This Call		
Minimum Acceptable Action		
My Unique Strengths With This Prospective Account		
Things I Want to Learn or Confirm in This Account (Appendix 5)		

### Integrity

- Don't reveal proprietary information.
- Don't play favorites.
- Deliver what you promise.
- Articulate Freightliner LLC policy and stick to it.

## Getting In... and to the Decision-Maker

All the effective planning in the world doesn't help unless you can get an audience at the prospect company. And ultimately, the audience needs to be with a decision-maker.

### Cold Calling

Cold calling rarely gets you directly to the decision-maker, unless you have prior knowledge of whom that is, or are lucky. But cold calling can be useful for the first step of getting inside. Then you can use the techniques below to identify the decision-maker.

#### *Getting Past the Fear*

For many people, cold calling is not a pleasant idea. You're often confronted with rejection after rejection, and the prospect of more of that is daunting. There are some "do's and don'ts" that can help.

- Have something in your hand, like a flyer or brochure. It helps to get the conversation moving.
- Be as well prepared as you can be. Research the company, and even though it's a cold call, think about the information-gathering questions in Appendix 5.
- Don't let fear get in the way. Cold-call reluctance is a malady that really comes from not knowing exactly how to do it.
- Be prepared for rejection. People aren't rejecting you. They just aren't yet ready for your product or your offer.
- Try to learn from those who say "no." Ask them why they are not interested in talking with you.
- Practice. And then practice some more.

## ***Your Opening Lines***

Never apologize for calling, interrupting, or “wasting” their time. After all, you’ve got a worthwhile product to offer them—solutions for their business problems. They just don’t know it yet.

Avoid nonsense lines like “*Great weather, isn’t it?*” or “*How are you today?*” But an “ego stroker” like “*Your trucks look great*” or “*You have an impressive facility*” can help create a relaxed atmosphere.

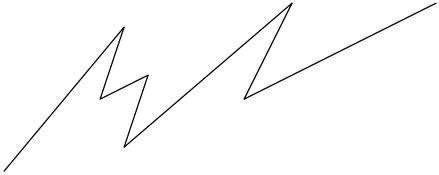
- Give your name and your company name.
- Have an objective to the call and get to the point fast. Examples that you could use are:
  - I’d like to discuss the material I mailed to you...
  - I need some information about...
  - I’d like a chance to show you how I can...
- Drop a power question or statement on the prospect. These are questions or statements that make the prospect think, show that you understand his or her business, cause the prospect to divulge information you want, or that relate to a known need of the prospect.
  - “What do you look for...?”
  - “What have you found...?”
  - “How do you propose...?”
  - “What has been your experience...?”
  - “How do you determine...?”
  - “What makes you choose...?”
- Ask for the sale! It may be that you only want a face-to-face meeting, but you must still ask for it to get it.

## **Networking**

Networking was covered earlier. It’s an effective way to get inside. Networking is similar to cold calling in that you’re not sure if you’re meeting with a decision-maker. Like cold calling, you’re also asking for the “sale.” In this case, the “sale” is an on-site meeting.

## The Sales Letter

Letters don't have to be literary masterpieces; they just have to follow some simple rules.

- State your objective immediately, even in a heading if appropriate.
  - Use short sentences and paragraphs.
  - Keep the letter to a half page if possible—one page maximum. Shorter letters are more likely to be read.
  - Show confidence in who you are and what you do.
  - Don't oversell your product; it won't sell on the basis of your letter anyway. Instead, sell the next step (a meeting or phone call to set up a meeting).
- 

Selling is not “linear.” It’s a constant process of recycling: questions, information, more questions, resistance, more questions, ...
- Don't overdo “thanks.” Once at the end is enough.
  - Avoid business-speak, like “Thanking you in advance.”
  - Bold, bullet, or italicize only those things that might be of interest to the prospect, not the things that are of interest to you.
  - Edit the letter thoroughly.
  - Check spelling twice.
  - Avoid superlatives (the most, the best).
  - Ask for the “sale” (a call, a meeting) using a specific time frame.

Of course, you must follow up on each letter with a phone call. Treat the call like a cold call. Talk about the letter.

## Moving Up the “Buy Hierarchy”

The best way to move up the “buy hierarchy,” that is, find the person with the most authority to buy, is to start at the top! The higher you start, the more success you’re likely to have. That’s not always easy, but it can be done.

### *Starting at the Top*

Getting a meeting with a CEO can be accomplished using the same rules as the cold call, but they must be executed perfectly.

- Conduct thorough planning about the company and its issues. Be prepared; you won’t get two chances.
- Be polite and professional on the phone, but be firm. If you don’t get past an assistant the first time, find out when it’s a good time to call back, and be persistent.
- Engage any assistant that you encounter as an ally. Ask him or her for help in getting to their boss.
- When you get through, get to the point immediately. Use a compelling power question or statement.
- Don’t accept a handoff immediately. Explain that you can appreciate the desire to delegate, but that your opportunity will significantly impact the prospect’s business. Offer to use no more than 5 minutes.
- Ask for the sale. If the call leads to a meeting with the leader, that’s the best scenario. Your contact will lead you to the right person if you’ve made a compelling case to do so.
- Make the 5-minute meeting as effective as it can be.
  - Have a proposal in writing.
  - Compile a list of possible questions and their answers.
  - Have notes on all the things you want to cover.
  - Find a way to be memorable.
- Ask for an action. The most probable, and potentially successful, action is to be introduced to a lower-level person with the authority to buy.



## ***Finding the Decision-Maker***

You won't always land a meeting with the CEO, or other company leaders. More likely, you'll find yourself meeting with someone at a lower level. It might be the right person and it might not. Your job is to find out.

The person who has agreed to meet with you is likely to be one of three types of contact. He or she might be a *receptive* contact, a *dissatisfied* contact, or an *action-based* contact.

The *receptive* contact is willing to talk, and willing to provide you with the information you are looking for. This contact may have no need for your product, and may have no authority to buy it. But the receptive contact can be very useful as an entry point. He or she can answer your questions, one of which is, "*Who should I be talking to?*" and even provide an introduction. Cold calling often brings you in at the "receptive" level.

Be wary of the receptive contact. A person who is easy to talk to, and listens to your story, may lull you into thinking that grooming a business relationship with him or her is worth a lot of your time. It often isn't.

The receptive contact can lead you to the first of two, potentially more useful types of contact: the *dissatisfied* contact. In this context, *dissatisfied* means that he or she is not happy with something about the business that you have a possible solution for. Obviously, if you can learn what the dissatisfaction is, and show how your product solves the problem, success is much closer. A questioning technique demonstrated later will show how that's done.

Bear in mind that "dissatisfaction" may not be overt. This contact may think everything is "all right." In that case, "dissatisfied contact" would be defined as the person who is willing to listen to a "better way."

Dissatisfied contacts may still not have the authority to buy. But if convinced that your solution is needed, they will lead you to the buying authority, the *action-based* contact.

*Action-based* contacts are oriented to action; they can and will purchase solutions to requirements that exist in the company. If the *dissatisfied* contact is also *action-based*, you're almost home. Otherwise, the introduction was necessary. Sometimes, the dissatisfied contact will sponsor you with the action-based contact, who you never meet. It really doesn't matter, as long as a sale results.

### **Selling Versus Buying**

People love to buy. They don't generally like to be "sold." Your job is to heighten their desire to buy without demonstrating stereotypical selling behavior. It's called "consultative selling."

## An Entry Strategy

The three types of contact suggest an effective entry strategy:

- Identify the person in the company most likely to be receptive to information about products and services that you offer. You might do that through researching job titles, networking, asking the receptionist—any number of ways. If you've gained entry through networking or especially cold calling, you likely are dealing with a receptive contact, and should consider it that until proven otherwise.
- It is critical to avoid trying to sell this first contact. Receptive contacts usually don't have buying power and can be afraid to talk with salespeople as a result. Remember that their job is to provide information and their reaction to your services. Tell them that that is what you're after before the meeting, and keep your promise during the meeting.
- The information questions that you developed as part of your Contact Plan are now invaluable. You can find out what the issues are, who the players are, and how things work at the prospective account. Specifically, you want to find out where the real or potential dissatisfied contact is ("potential" in that they may not be aware of their dissatisfaction until you meet with them). Try to arrange an introduction.
- The questions in the meeting with the dissatisfied contact will all be oriented toward identifying the source and magnitude of the dissatisfaction, and building a sense of its impact on the business. More later.
- Then, you will continue to use the questioning techniques we'll cover later to build your case, up to the action-based contact.

## Creating a “Buying Environment”

When you’ve entered the prospect’s company, you’re ready to start selling. If you were selling hot dogs at the ballpark, this step is pretty simple. You’d start yelling, “*Get your red-hot here!*” and you’d be in business. Walking through your prospect’s offices yelling, “*Get your truck parts here!*” probably wouldn’t work very well. Unfortunately, it’s not that simple!

Your prospect probably has alternatives to buying from you, unlike the situation at the ballpark. He or she may not even see a need for your products. So your job with your higher ticket items is to create an environment of need—a buying environment.

### What Does the Buyer Want From You?

It helps to first understand what supports the development of a buying environment from the buyer’s perspective. Unless you can help create and maintain that environment, you won’t be as effective in finding the buyer’s agenda and getting to his or her needs.

A buying environment is made possible by a salesperson who:

- Gives facts truthfully and in a straightforward way, and who gets to the point quickly.
- Talks about benefits that are real to the buyer, not features of the product.
- Doesn’t talk negatively, especially about the competition.
- Doesn’t argue.
- Doesn’t talk down or patronize the buyer.
- Doesn’t tell the buyer his or her current choice of provider is wrong.
- Listens.
- Takes an interest in the buyer’s business, beyond his or her need for the products being sold.
- Helps the buyer buy, and doesn’t sell the buyer.
- Is sincere about a willingness to help the business grow.
- Reinforces the decision of the buyer.

Of course, these guidelines don’t generate any sales by themselves. They simply ensure that the process will continue to work toward that goal.

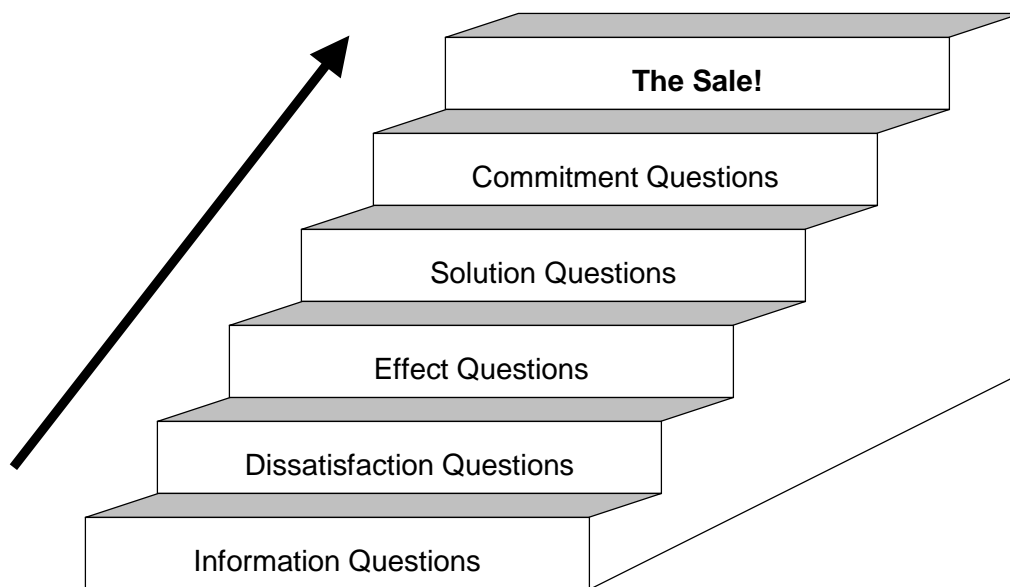
## Finding the Buyer's Dissatisfaction

Earlier, the *dissatisfied* contact was described. That's a potential buyer who either has an actual problem with the current situation in the business (actual dissatisfaction), or who could be convinced that there is a better way to achieve his or her goals (potential dissatisfaction). The *receptive* contact usually provides the information (that comes from the questions you prepared in your Contact Plan) that is necessary to find the *dissatisfied* contact. This is the first level of contact that may actually buy, if he or she has the authority to do so. Either way, finding that dissatisfaction, or creating a sense of it that didn't exist before, is the first selling step.

Finding the buyer's dissatisfaction requires a strong ability to ask the proper questions, and then react appropriately to them—to get to the buyer's *needs*.

## Getting to the Buyer's Needs Through Questions

Effective questioning follows a five-step process that leads to a sale.



We'll explore each of these types of questions.

## **Information Questions**

Information questions are really not a direct part of the selling process. They are designed to help you learn the things that are necessary to get to the selling process, and to be effective.

One purpose of information questions is to provide you with information about how the company operates. What does it do? What kinds of products does it use? How many? What are its plans for growth?

Another critical purpose of information questions is to help you find the *dissatisfied* contact, where the selling process really begins. Who is responsible for...? Who might be interested in learning more about...? What are the purchasing procedures in this company?

The types of questions that you might ask are varied, and depend upon the situation you find yourself in, but the basic questions can be planned, as you've already done in the earlier Contact Plan exercise using Appendix 6.

Information questions are almost always used with your first contact into the company, who is often the *receptive* contact (that's typically why they've agreed to see you). Receptive contacts may derive from networking, a sales letter, cold calling, referral, or any other means of lead identification that you might employ. With these contacts, you'd ask information questions about both the company and the "right people to talk to."

It is possible that your first contact **is** the *dissatisfied* or even the *action-based* contact. That's especially true if your entry is through a referral, or an industry association. Then your information questions are largely about how the company operates, what it does, etc.

A great source of information also comes from observation. For example, if you're in the repair facility, look at the kind of work being done. You may find both a conversation starter and an opportunity to provide the parts or at least a quote.

Finally, while you need to learn the essentials about the business, be careful to not ask too many information questions. Buyers will get bored answering them. That's why planning your needs is so important.

## **Dissatisfaction Questions**

It's possible that your prospect will sit you down and say, "*We've been having real difficulties with ABC Parts Suppliers for some time now. Their parts just aren't the kind of quality we're looking for. I've brought you in to help me fix that problem!*" It's possible, just not very common.

More commonly, it's your job to find the real or potential "dissatisfaction."

Dissatisfaction questions are based on the kind of information that you get from the information questions. For example, if you've learned that the company has been experiencing growth over the past year, a dissatisfaction question might be, "*What are some of the implications of your expected growth on your ability to get the parts you'll need?*" Or, "*During this growth, have you experienced any difficulties obtaining the parts you need to keep your fleet on the road?*" Or, "*To what extent has your growth negatively affected the percentage of time your trucks are running?*"

Other forms of dissatisfaction questions are related to:

- Reliability
- Quality
- Availability
- Usability
- Cost
- Support services
- Difficulty to use
- Applicability
- Overall disadvantages

### **They Talk, You Listen**

When the customer talks, you are building rapport.

When the customer talks, you are focusing on the customer.

When the customer talks about his or her dissatisfaction, you are moving toward a sale.

To some salespeople, dissatisfaction questions seem rude. Why ask about all that dirty laundry? But in almost all cases, buyers sit up and take notice of those people who show an interest in helping them solve their problems.

### **Effect Questions**

When dissatisfaction is uncovered, effect questions look for the effect, or impact, of the issue that's causing the dissatisfaction. Usually, they are asked in concert with the dissatisfaction question.

- *"What are some of the implications of your expected growth on your ability to get the parts you'll need?"*

*"There could be some initial problems, I suppose."*

***"Would those problems keep your fleet off the road?"***

- *"To what extent has your growth negatively affected the percentage of time your trucks are running?"*

*"I think our down time is up about 3%."*

***"How does a down time of 3% affect your bottom line?"***

Note that the prospect's answer was incorporated into the next question to show you've listened and understood the prospect's perspective.

These questions are designed to make the dissatisfaction seem even bigger to the prospect—to make it obvious that a solution is necessary, and soon! You can't plan these questions; they must result from things that the prospect is telling you.

Other forms of effect questions are related to:

- Effects on output
- Effects on plans, the ability to complete them and/or their timing
- Costs
- Effects on people
- Effects on the prospect's customers

When you are satisfied that the prospect has grasped the effect of his or her dissatisfaction on the business, and hasn't yet become overly depressed with the new-found scope of his or her problem, you're ready to move toward *solution* questions.

### ***Solution Questions***

Solution questions move the discussion from the negative aspect (effects of the dissatisfaction) toward the light at the end of the tunnel. They focus the prospect's attention on the solution rather than the problem itself. And they also cause the prospect to acknowledge verbally that a solution is needed, and to *start telling **you** the benefits of a solution.*

Solution questions ask:

- Why it's important to solve the problem
- The benefits that would result from a solution
- How a different way of doing things would help
- The usefulness of a solution

A series of solution questions might look like this:

- *"To what extent has your growth negatively affected the percentage of time your trucks are running?"*

*"I think our down time is up about 3%."*

*"How does that affect your bottom line?"*

*"It's probably about \$100,000 a year."*

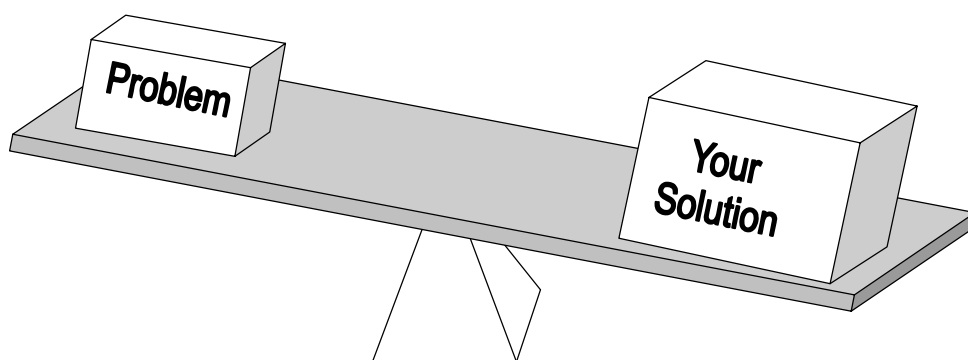
***"So the ability to get parts faster and more reliably could have a big impact on your revenues?"***

Dissatisfaction, effect, and solution questions are not necessarily asked sequentially, but are incorporated as appropriate throughout the conversation with the prospect.

Now you're ready to show how you can solve the prospect's problem, because now you have all the information you need to show how your product and processes can be a *benefit* to the prospect by eliminating the source of dissatisfaction. Everything you say about your products—their costs, availability, and quality—should point to their benefits.

Appendix 7 contains a list of benefits that buyers often look for.

Finally, bear in mind that your solution must not be “harder to swallow” than the dissatisfaction itself. If your solution is far costlier than the problem itself, it will be rejected.



When this happens there are three choices you can make.

- Reduce the cost or scope of your solution.
- Return to effect questions, to increase the magnitude of the problem in the prospect's eyes.
- Recognize that your solution won't work. Retreat, and live to sell another day!



## ***Commitment Questions***

Commitment questions obtain the buyer's agreement to an action that moves your sale forward. It may be a commitment to buy, or a commitment to introduce you to someone who has the authority to buy.

Commitment questions can also include the "close," which is the request to buy. We'll spend time on closes in the next section of this course.

Commitment questions use words like:

- Decide
- Going to
- Agree
- Purpose
- Commit
- Plan
- Intend
- Direct
- Recommend
- Secure

For example, *"Will you recommend a meeting with your President based on this conversation?"*

## The Language of the Buyer

The prerequisite to this course, *Selling Skills*, described the approach of four behavioral styles that you are likely to encounter, their approach, and your preferred response.

Behavior Style	Their Approach	Your Response
<i>Amiable</i>	Appear uncertain, confused, shy, lacking confidence, perhaps expressionless, anxious, unable to look in the eye, evasive, barely answering questions, and not telling you what they want.	Smile warmly. Have all the time in the world (no darting eyes or heavy sighs). Provide reassurance that you can help them. Carefully explain anything they don't understand. Do not talk down to them. Do not rush them.
<i>Analytical</i>	Questioning (perhaps maddeningly so), seemingly hard to "pin down," don't make eye contact often, ask for complete explanations and proof for claims. Settle in.	Answer questions fully, concentrate on step-by-step logic. Take your time, give them something physical (like a part) to hold on to and handle. Offer evidence, get agreement, and summarize before moving on.
<i>Expressive</i>	Relaxed, friendly, chatty, calm, interested in your advice, cooperative, and helpful.	Let them know they are appreciated. Give them more service value than they expected (and they will telegraph that they don't expect much).
<i>Driver</i>	Assertive, insistent, authoritative, barking out orders briskly, abrupt, interrupting you, and talking fast.	Take immediate action. Listen and move fast. Show readiness and responsiveness but don't hesitate to bring up additional things that support their needs. Stay calm but alert.

In each case, your response is designed to best meet the needs of the other person who is likely to be behaving in his or her preferred style. Your job is to "bend" your preferred style to better match theirs.

In sales, building rapport is very important. And, right or wrong, *people trust those most like themselves*. That's why it's important to properly react to the preferred style of a buyer.

Another layer of style has been evident to researchers for quite a few years. People tend to show how they think through their patterns of speech, or the language they use. In a selling environment, your ability to better match their language selection sends a subconscious signal to the buyer that the two of you are thinking alike. You're speaking the *language of the buyer*.

## Language Preferences

Consider these sentences:

- I see what is going on here.
- I hear what you're saying.
- I feel that it's going to be all right.

Thinking about three of our bodily senses, sight, hearing, and touch/feeling, which sense fits with each sentence?

Each of those sentences represent statements you encounter all the time, and they signal a preference of the speaker for one of three language styles: *Visual*, *Auditory*, or *Intuition/Feeling*.

People with a visual language preference often express themselves with verbs and predicates that are associated with *sight*. People with an auditory language preference often use words associated with *hearing*. And people with an intuition/feeling preference literally perceive the world through touch or intuition.

You can often *hear* a person's preference. For example, look how three people respond to a realtor's description of a house for sale.

<i>Visual</i>	I liked the description of the first house the best. I could see myself in it. It's the way a house should <i>look</i> .
<i>Auditory</i>	I liked the description of the first house the best. It <i>sounds</i> the way I <i>talk</i> about houses I like.
<i>Intuition/Feeling</i>	I <i>feel</i> good about the description of the first house. That kind of house <i>fits</i> my style.

Or, you might see the preference.

<i>Visual</i>	Stares at your proposal without seeming to focus
<i>Auditory</i>	Reads the headings out loud, asks you to summarize
<i>Intuition/Feeling</i>	Plays with the paper

## ***Matching Language Preferences***

To build trust with a prospect, and to gain his or her confidence, it's helpful to match his or her language preference. A little practice (try watching a few TV shows where you look for language preferences) will enable you to spot the preferred style of most people quickly.

In the exercise below, read the statement and indicate the likely preferred language style (visual, auditory or intuitive/feeling) in the appropriate column below. The answers are shown in Appendix 8.

	Visual	Auditory	Intuitive/ Feeling
You only need to take a close look at this part.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reach out and touch someone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deciding to buy is a matter of trust.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A thousand points of light. (George W. Bush)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I want to give you more than a feeling of quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Big Mac Attack!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Let me tell you the reasons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you care enough to send the very best.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Here's what other people say about us.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You can hear a pin drop.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look at the attention we've given to machining.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This issue is too hot to handle.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## ***Phrases for Each Language Preference***

Appendix 9 contains a number of phrases that you can use when you have determined the language preference of the buyer.

## ***Nonverbal “Language Preferences”***

People also have preferences that are expressed nonverbally, such as posture, movements, and gestures. Examples are leaning forward, drinking coffee or water, crossing legs, tilting the head.

If done carefully, matching these nonverbal activities can also help build rapport. But there are a few very important rules.

- 1) Never do something that makes you uncomfortable.
- 2) Always delay matching the gesture for a little while. Immediate matches get noticed.
- 3) **Never get noticed.** If you do, you’ll be seen as manipulative and all may be lost.

### **Mixing Language Preferences**

When you are addressing a group, it is likely that each preferred style exists in the group. Plan your comments so that you incorporate each style.

*“I have some information for you to **look** at. We can **talk** about it briefly, and then I’ll show you how it can **work** for you.”*

## Getting the Sale

Conducting each step of the questioning process effectively usually prevents major problems in the journey toward the ultimate goal—the sale. But at times roadblocks are thrown in your way that must be handled well for the process to continue. And in the end, you must ask for the sale to get it. This section of the course will explore some of these issues.

- Countering your vulnerabilities
- Overcoming, and more effectively, *preventing* objections
- Dealing with your competition
- Looking for buying cues
- The close—when it works well, and when it might not
- How to get the buyer to act

## Countering Your Vulnerabilities

There are three key strategies for dealing with vulnerabilities, which are occasions when the buyer views your competition as stronger than you.

### ***Change the Decision Criteria***

This method is usually used first. It is used when an important criterion that the buyer is using to make a decision favors your competition.

- Find another criterion that the buyer is considering that does favor you, and build it up. Hopefully, it can become even more important than the one that the buyer initially finds most important. For example, your higher prices might be offset by your ability to deliver parts without a long lead time.
- Show that all of the criteria that the buyer is using are perfectly matched by no one—each choice is a compromise. Help the buyer recognize that there are limitations, penalties, or disadvantages associated with the competition's offer. For example, your competitor's lower may bring with it the "penalty" of lower quality parts.

## ***Make Your Offer Look Stronger***

- To the extent you can, create alternative solutions that better meet the decision criteria of the buyer. Good questioning throughout the process should enable you to fully understand the specific needs of the buyer.
- Correct any buyer misunderstandings that may have led to his or her perception of you as the weaker choice.
- If possible, negotiate. For example, if the buyer wants 10 units in 3 weeks, and you can only deliver 10 in 6 weeks, offer 5 in 3 weeks and the rest within 6 weeks.

## ***Make Their Offer Look Weaker***

This method is potentially dangerous, and should be used only when you're sure you won't reduce your own credibility. Attacking competitors directly is generally not a good strategy. Several methods can work, however.

Use an indirect approach. Suppose you are asked to compare your parts with those of a competitor. The direct attack might be, "Their parts are more expensive, and less reliable." By focusing directly on them, you might actually build their importance, even though the words were negative. A better approach is, "Our parts are less expensive, and more reliable." You've said the same thing, but kept the discussion on your parts, not theirs. Of course, this only works when you have a superior product.

## **Overcoming and Preventing Objections**

### ***Overcoming Objections***

The first objective when an objection is raised is to fully understand what it really signifies. Is it the *real* objection, or just a smoke screen? Then you can deal with it.

- Listen to the objection carefully. Let the buyer talk it out. Don't interrupt.
- Politely question the buyer to ensure that you fully understand the objection. Don't disagree, just look for the facts.
- Confirm the objection in your words. "*So if the prices were lower, you'd consider buying?*" You're looking for a "yes" answer here. Continue confirming objections until you get a positive response.
- Ask a question that incorporates the solution. "If I can demonstrate that your business can easily justify our price based on the value our parts will provide, would that help you make a decision?"
- Answer the objection in a way that completely resolves the objection.

#### **The Objections "Coach"**

Objections should make you grateful! The objector is enabling you to coach him or her on how to deal with similar objections raised by others in the company after you've left.

## ***The “Real” Objection***

The true, or “real,” objection of a potential buyer is often masked by the words actually chosen to object. It’s often useful to interpret the words in such a way that you can turn them into a request for information, which you can then supply.

Appendix 10 shows some examples of how to turn a stated objection into an implied request for more information.

## ***Preventing Objections***

It’s a lot easier if the objection doesn’t come up in the first place. The best way to accomplish that is to continually focus on the benefits your products will bring to the buyer, not on their features or advantages.

Have you ever noticed that higher priced items rarely focus on features? For example, an ad for a \$10 calculator watch is usually filled with its features, but an ad for a Rolex often just shows its picture. Research has shown that the price level where specific features become unimportant to a buyer and benefits become more important is surprisingly low, often a few hundred dollars. Your products often fall in that higher-priced category. The impact of features, advantages, and benefits on buyers for these items is shown below.

		<b><i>Impact on Buyer</i></b>
Feature	Facts and data about the product	Neutral or negative
Advantage	Shows how the product can help the buyer	Slightly positive
Benefit	Shows how the product meets an explicit need voiced by the buyer	Very positive

The questioning technique that was presented in a prior section of this course is designed to help you focus on benefits, by getting to the explicit needs of the buyer.

Another approach is to script answers to likely objections into your discussion with the buyer. The key to doing that is to anticipate them.

- Identify and write down likely objections.
- Script objection-answering comments that you can employ during your discussion.
- Develop charts and other visual media to shown your strengths.
- Use current customer testimonials when you have them.



## Dealing With Your Competition

Successful selling in a competitive market requires the ability to differentiate your product from competing alternatives. We looked at one approach in the earlier section, “Countering Your Vulnerabilities.” We’ve also looked at the need to avoid making negative statements about a competitor.

There are two general types of differentiators, *hard* and *soft*.

*Hard* differentiators are those that can be measured objectively. They include prices, size, weight, speed, compatibility, time of delivery—among other things. Generally, hard differentiators are easiest to deal with; they are what they are. If you are able to, you can use one hard differentiator that is a strength to counter another that is a weakness. That was shown earlier in “Countering Your Vulnerabilities.”

*Soft* differentiators are less objective. They might include somewhat vague ideas of “quality,” or “ease of use.” When the buyer is using soft differentiators, your job is to help the buyer turn them into hard differentiators to the extent possible. For example, “quality” as a word is imprecise. What specific information about your product (hard differentiators) can be used to demonstrate superiority in quality? What does “ease of use” mean, exactly? It could mean a 50% reduction in necessary inventory for the buyer, because you are able to supply parts much faster. It could mean that a testing process takes half the time. In all cases, look for ways to turn soft differentiators into hard. Sometimes, that means guiding the buyer to help him or her better define the soft differentiator.

### Focus on Yourself

Dwelling on your competition can convey the impression that they threaten you. It can suggest to the buyer that he or she may have a very good reason to talk to them.

For these skills of dealing with your competitors to be effective, you need to know your competitors and what they offer.

- Know where they stand in the market and who their major customers are.
- Find out where you stand in comparison with them. Are they growing at your expense, or vice versa? Or is your relationship static?
- Collect and read information on their products and services. Visit their Web site if they have one.
- Get their prices.
- Identify the areas in which they are weaker. Identify where you are weaker, and to the extent you can, fix it.
- Finally, when you are with a buyer, show your competition respect at all times. Never say negative things about them, even if the buyer does. Show how you differ, and how your product benefits the buyer better. Stress your strengths, not their weaknesses.

## Buying Cues

A buying cue, or signal from the buyer that he or she is ready to make a decision to buy, can come at any time during the discussion. Be ready for it! Any of these phrases are usually buying signals from the prospect.

- Requests for a reference
- Questions about other satisfied customers
- Questions about quality (not challenges to the quality of your products)
- A request that you repeat something
- Questions about the operation of a product
- Questions about price or terms (not challenges of price or terms)
- Question about delivery details
- Requests for more information about your company and other products/services
- Questions about the qualifications of support staff
- Questions about warranty
- Questions about features or options
- Statements about problems the customer has had with previous vendors
- Requests to see a sample
- Any “buying noise,” such as “Oh, I didn’t know that!” or “That’s really interesting!”

If a buying cue is missed, or not properly responded to, an excellent selling opportunity will have been lost.

Any buying cue should lead to an immediate closing question, not a “yes” or “no” answer. Here are some examples.

- “Do you stock this part?” *“Do you need immediate delivery?”*
- “Do you deliver within 1 week?” *“Do you need it this coming week?”*

“Yes” or “no” answers from you simply prolong the selling process, and don’t move the buyer toward a commitment. This course cannot demonstrate every possible buying cue and response. It takes practice on your part. But every question you asked should be designed to move the buyer toward the answer, *“Yes, I want that!”*

Let’s look more closely at the “close”—getting the buyer to commit.

## The Close—Reexamined

### Closing Statements

- “When would be a convenient delivery date?”
- “How many will you need?”
- “How will you be paying for these items?”

A “close” is any behavior by you that invites a commitment, so that the buyer’s next statement either accepts or denies that commitment.

For larger sales, successful closes lead to two possible outcomes—an order or a commitment to advance (for example, an introduction to the action-based contact). Either is OK depending on the situation. Failure has two possible outcomes also. One is a clear statement that a sale is not going to happen. The other is a continuation in which no specific action is agreed to (“*Visit us again the next time you’re in the area*”).

Your job is to get the successful close. If you’ve done the process well to this point, a close is simply a statement to the buyer that you’re ready to move forward to implement the solutions you’ve discussed, and draw up a contract of sale.

- Keep the close reasonably low-key and nonthreatening. Don’t use words like *legal*, *binding*, *final*.
- Be positive with your voice and body language. After you close, **sit quietly** while the prospect makes his or her decision. A close is often an emotional event for a buyer. Let them know you’ll be around after the sale. Build trust.
- Be straightforward. “*It sounds like we have answered all your concerns.*” If the answer is “yes,” close the sale.

Studies have shown that there are times when a strong traditional closing attempt is ineffective or even has a negative effect. They are:

- In a large sale involving high-value products
- With a sophisticated buyer, e.g., a purchasing professional
- When you need a strong and continuing post-sale relationship with the customer

Nevertheless, a close is always necessary. In these cases, your consultative use of the questioning methods we’ve discussed will lead you to a mutually agreeable decision to commit to the sale.

## How to Create Desired Action by a Buyer

If you want to influence someone, to get that person to do what you want him or her to do, you must first tell the person what that is with a clear and well-designed action statement.

Some, but not many, commercials or ads contain effective action statements, such as *Fly Delta* or *Don't Squeeze the Charmin* (which, of course, *invites* you to squeeze it!). Other ads don't contain action statements, for example, *The Ultimate Driving Machine*.

First, you need to decide what you want the person to do.

- Buy your product?
- Recommend you to someone else?
- Call back?
- Invite you to return?
- Read your informational material?
- Call a customer for a reference?
- Tell you who can make the decision?

Then choose an action phrase that uses action verbs to make your request. The statement should be short, limited to one or two key ideas, and be repeated a few times using different language.

For each of the pairs of statements below, decide whether A or B is the action phrase that will more likely create the desired action by the buyer. Answers are in the footnote below.<sup>†</sup>

A	B
Arrive on time, every day.	We hope that attendance will not be a problem.
As you read the information...	This information is for you.
Let me know what you think of the proposal.	After you read the proposal, we will talk about...
I look forward to our talking.	I look forward to hearing from you.
Western Star can be reached at ____.	Call Western Star at ____ when you need...
Thanks for calling Sterling. As you look at the information...	Thanks for your inquiry. Information is enclosed.
It was a pleasure talking with you.	I enjoyed our talk and look forward to doing it again.

---

<sup>†</sup> Action statements (top to bottom) are A, A, B, A, B, A, B

## After the Sale

We began this course by stating that your current customers are always your best prospect for new business. That means that you must build and nurture an ongoing relationship with them to develop a *partnership*—where you remain up to date on their changing objectives and they know your capabilities. Only then will you keep the competition out of the business.

### Account Management – The Basics

There are many ways to keep the relationship strong. Among them are:

- Send published articles of interest to the account (not necessarily of interest to *you*), delivered with a personal note.
- Send invitations to networking or other industry-related events.
- Invite the buyer to one of your facilities for a tour and to meet others.
- Use the telephone. Call often to keep in touch, but always respect the time demands on your account. Always have a purpose for the call, and make sure that some action (a meeting over lunch, an event, etc.) results from the call.
- Maintain good customer relations. Remember that all customers expect *perfect* service. You will differentiate yourself by providing services (immediate response, empathy, problem solving, advice, listening, and other related actions) that *exceed* the customer's expectations.

These fundamentals provide the ongoing “in” whereby you can continue to develop more complete information about the customer, analyze the customer's objectives and needs, and then influence the business decisions that are made by the account.

### Influencing Your Accounts

Having developed a strong relationship with the account, you are in a great position to influence the way purchase decisions are made.

#### ***Assist With the Development of Purchase Criteria***

Provide consultative assistance to the account that helps them determine the type and priorities of purchase criteria, such as price, delivery, and quality. Your knowledge of the business can help make those criteria supportive of you.

Honesty and ethics are important here. While you might not push for a criterion that you know you can't fulfill, your input should always put the needs of the business first. With a good relationship, salespeople often find that they can advance a criterion that they can't easily meet, and still win the business (perhaps through negotiating the criteria later) because of the trust established in the process.

### ***Help the Account Assess Various Purchase Options***

Sometimes policies within the account require that multiple bids be obtained for a piece of business, even though you are the established supplier. You may have an opportunity in these cases to help the account analyze the various options. A thorough familiarity with the customer's needs and priorities is essential. Your methods may include examination of performance data, product testing, field testing, or other means.

Again, absolute honesty is important. Taking on the consultant role will win you more business than if you never had the chance to be engaged in the process.

### ***Influence the Scope and Make-Up of the Decision-Making Group***

Request the inclusion of key personnel who are supportive of your business in the decision-making process. These may include engineering, operations, purchasing, even marketing people. You may also find strategic reasons to influence when each player gets involved. Some, for example, may be better at the earlier stages of the discussion, some in the later stages.

Sometimes key people are not in the actual decision-making process but can influence it because you've built a strong relationship with them.

### ***Influence the Scope and Timing of the Decision***

Influencing the scope and/or timing of the decision may provide advantages to you. One example is a case where a competitor provides a superior product to yours currently, but that advantage will cease when you introduce a planned, improved alternative. A sound business reason to defer the decision is in your favor.

### ***Provide Varied Buying Incentives***

A buying incentive is the specific criterion or criteria that a specific member of the account team may use to reach a buying decision. *Buying incentives may vary from person to person within the same company.*

For example,

- Engineering may have a quality and reliability incentive.
- Operations and service may have a delivery and ease of installation/use incentive.
- Finance and purchasing may have a price and warranty incentive.
- Marketing may look for ways your product can be used to improve marketplace image. ("At our donut shop, we sell Starbucks® coffee").

Knowing the people who will be involved in a decision about forthcoming business enables you to customize the buying incentive for each.

#### **Working With Groups**

When working with groups, make sure you meet all the members, determine whom the leader is, ask about the decision-making process, and assess the overall "dynamics" of the group. You will find apparent strengths and weaknesses in leadership styles.

Appendix 11 lists some tools to deal with various leadership styles.

## Strategic Planning

Knowledge of your major accounts—derived from an ongoing relationship—enables you to conduct effective strategic planning, consisting of periodic reviews of the account and your role in it, and the resulting plan covering an appropriate period of time. Good strategic planning allows you to be in the right place at the right time to impact buying decisions.

*Three thirteenth-century masons are mixing mortar in a huge cauldron. A passerby stops and asks them what they're doing.*

*The first says, "Mixing mortar," while he continues his stirring.*

*The second says, "We're making mortar to hold the stone blocks together."*

*The third looks over his shoulder. "We're building a cathedral," he says proudly.*

Sales stars invariably see the biggest picture, not the smallest. They don't only ask, "How do we get this business." They also ask, "How does this business tie into other business that we might get from this account?" They ask, "How do we position ourselves in this account so we're as solid in five years as we are today?"

The two strategic planning skills that are used by sales stars are *account assessment* and *account planning*.

### Account Assessment

- Every 6 months or so, revisit the relationship you have with the account. Have you correctly defined your scope of involvement? Have you been trying to reach too broad or too narrow a segment of the company? Are you selling the optimum range of products? Are there some you should add, or even withdraw? Are you bringing value into the account? Are you providing business solutions, or just selling product? Are you moving up in the business, or down? Why?
- Define your sales accomplishments with the account. What has the company done in the last 6 months to further cement its relationship with you?
- Investigate lost sales, both those that were lost to a competitor and those that materialized for no one. Why was the business lost? What changes in your approach might prevent such losses in the future? What obstacles still stand in the way of your relationship?
- Reassess your opportunities with this account. Are they still viable?

### ***Account Planning***

Details of goal setting were covered in the earlier section of this course, “Setting Your Sights on Prospects.” It works the same way for existing accounts.

- State your specific account goals for the next year. State them in terms of revenue and date of completion. Do the opportunities you identified in your assessment make them feasible?
- Set measurable milestones.

### ***A Strategic Planning Exercise***

Select a key account that you are presently involved with. Use the forms in Appendix 12 to construct a current account assessment and account plan.



## Summary

*Selling* is not an “art.” But it is a lifelong journey of mastering new skills to best meet the changing challenges you face every day.

*Selling* begins long before you actually meet with a prospect. Effective salespeople target and research new prospects, and source leads through a variety of means. They plan their contacts using the research they’ve done to assess the needs of the prospect. And they know how to penetrate an account and get to the right people.

*Selling* success requires that the right questions be asked, always leading toward a prospect's decision to buy. Effective salespeople don't try to “sell” directly; they work with the prospect to establish the need in that person's mind. And they always close the sale—get the buyer to act.

*Selling* doesn't stop with the sale. Proper management of existing accounts can help you influence future decisions about parts purchases, and good strategies with your existing accounts can lead to significant growth in your business.

## Appendices

### Contents

Appendix 1 – What Do I Believe? .....	49
Appendix 2 – My Personal Mission Statement .....	50
Appendix 3 – Territory Analysis .....	51
Appendix 4 – My Unique Strengths .....	54
Appendix 5 – Information Questions .....	55
Appendix 6 – Contact Plan .....	56
Appendix 7 – Buyer Benefits .....	57
Appendix 8 – Answers to “Matching Language Preference” Exercise .....	58
Appendix 9 – Language Preference Phrases .....	59
Appendix 10 – The “Real” Objection .....	60
Appendix 11– Group Leadership Styles and Your Response .....	61
Appendix 12 – Account Assessment and Plan .....	62

## Appendix 1 – What Do I Believe?

Consider each of the following sentences, and choose the one whose emphasis (the underlined word) best matches your belief.

- To **succeed** at sales, you must sell.
- To succeed at **sales**, you must sell.
- To succeed at sales, **you** must sell.
- To succeed at sales, you **must** sell.
- To succeed at sales, you must **sell**.

What word was underlined in the version you chose?

<b>Succeed</b>	You're focused on the goal. You could become unrealistic; you won't sell everyone.
<b>Sales</b>	You might think that salespeople are born; that it's more of an art than a learnable process.
<b>You</b>	You take personal responsibility for your sales success.
<b>Must</b>	You may have a strong motivation to sell. Or, you might feel some desperation when things don't work out as you planned.
<b>Sell</b>	You may see yourself as action oriented, working a solid sales program. Be careful that you don't go through a series of repetitive motions for all situations.

## Appendix 2 – My Personal Mission Statement

The reasons I chose a sales career: (e.g. monetary rewards, helping people, the challenge)

The things in life that are truly important to me:

My personal values:

My career vision—where I want to go in my career:

My exceptional sales qualifications:

My sales inspiration to others:

My positive impacts on my customers:

Principles that I model as often as possible:

My purpose in my career—what I want to contribute through my career:

### ***Existing Business***

### Appendix 3 – Territory Analysis, *continued*

## Competitors' Business

[illegible]

## ***New Business***

---

## Appendix 4 – My Unique Strengths

For each contact you make with a prospect, think about the possible strengths you might bring to that prospect. For each that you select, identify why the strength is important, and how you can demonstrate that you really have it!

Strength	Importance	Proof
Application		
Customer base		
Delivery		
Experience		
Implementation		
Inventory		
Knowledge		
Logistics		
Organization		
Process		
Product		
Reputation		
Service		
Support people		
Technology		
Training		
Other		



## Appendix 5 – Information Questions

Some examples of information questions are listed below:

- What product or service does the prospect supply?
- How does the company position itself in the marketplace? What customers is it trying to reach?
- How competitive is the company's market right now? Who is their competition?
- What are the biggest issues, challenges, or problems facing them at this time?
- What changes in the industry might be impacting this prospect's business?
- How is/has the company addressing/addressed these issues?
- Were the company's solutions successful? What room is there for improvement?
- What would help the company improve its productivity or market penetration?
- What aspects of your product would the company find useful?
- What factors does the company use to choose a vendor such as you?
- Has the prospect company thought about how your products could improve its market position?
- What is the company spending currently on parts?
- What is the company getting for the money it is spending? What is it not getting that it wants?
- What is the buying cycle? When are decisions made? When is the next contract up for renewal?
- In what ways is the company changing or planning to change? How does that impact the use of your product?
- How are changes in the industry impacting this prospect?
- Where is this company among its competitors in pricing? Volume? Revenue?
- What challenges does this company face?
- What are your objectives?
- Who is responsible for [what you're selling]?
- What experiences have you had with [what you're selling]?
- Who is involved with decisions about using [what you're selling]?
- How are buying decisions made here?

## Appendix 6 – Contact Plan

<b>Contact Plan</b>	Prospective Account
	Date of Call
Contact Name	
Contact Title	
Nature of Business	
Objective of This Call	
Minimum Acceptable Action	
My Unique Strengths With This Prospective Account	
Things I Want to Learn or Confirm in This Account (Appendix 5)	

## Appendix 7 – Buyer Benefits

Benefits that buyers often look for are listed below:

- Increased efficiency
- Increased revenues
- Cost reductions
- Better company image
- Higher customer satisfaction and retention
- Expanded or different customer base
- Better service
- Added value
- Better marketplace positioning
- Ability to compete more effectively
- Employee satisfaction and retention
- Marketplace knowledge
- Corporate identity
- Better quality
- Faster turnaround
- Better warranty

## Appendix 8 – Answers to “Matching Language Preference” Exercise

Answers for the likely preferred language style (visual, auditory or intuitive/feeling) for the statements on page 34 are shown below.

	Visual	Auditory	Intuitive/ Feeling
You only need to take a close look at this part.	✓		
Reach out and touch someone.			✓
Deciding to buy is a matter of trust.			✓
A thousand points of light. (George W. Bush)	✓		
I want to give you more than a feeling of quality.			✓
Big Mac Attack!			✓
Let me tell you the reasons.		✓	
When you care enough to send the very best.			✓
Here's what other people say about us.		✓	
You can hear a pin drop.		✓	
Look at the attention we've given to machining.	✓		
This issue is too hot to handle.			✓

## Appendix 9 – Language Preference Phrases

Here are some phrases you can use when you've determined the language preference of the buyer.

### Visual Phrases

- Look at this
- See it
- Watch this
- Illustrate my point
- Envision the following
- Shed light on the issue
- Visualize the idea
- Picture the scenario
- Observe that
- Show me
- Draw conclusions
- Look into it

### Auditory Phrases

- Sounds good
- Let's talk about it
- Let me tell you
- I'm in tune with you
- We're in harmony
- Amplify that point
- I hear you
- Call me
- Loud and clear
- Voice your opinion
- It rings true
- Chime in

### Intuitive/Feeling Phrases

- Get a feel for
- Point it out
- I'm not comfortable
- Go for it
- Manipulate the data
- Tough to deal with
- Kick it upstairs
- Toss this around
- A concrete idea
- What's the impact
- A solid base
- Make a connection

## Appendix 10 – The “Real” Objection

Often you’ll have to infer the real objection from the stated one, and turn it into a request for more information.

The Stated Objection	The Real Objection	The Buyer’s Implied Request
The price is too high.	I don’t see enough benefit to justify the price.	Show me additional value.
I need to think about it.	I’m afraid to make a bad decision.	Show me something that will convince me that this is the best decision.
I want to get other quotes.	I’m not sure you’re fully meeting my needs.	Target your solutions to my specific needs.
I presently use another supplier.	I don’t see you as being any better.	Differentiate yourself for me.
I’ve had a bad history with suppliers.	I see you as one of “them.”	Prove to me that you’re better.
I need to talk to others.	I’m not sure you’re fully meeting my needs.	Target your solutions to my specific needs.
	or	or
	I’m not the decision-maker.	Ask me how the decision will be made.

## Appendix 11 – Group Leadership Styles and Your Response

The table below lists some tools to deal with various leadership styles.

Leader Style	Peer Style	Your Response
Strong	Weak	This is the best scenario. Converting the leader will generally make the sale.
Strong	Strong	Take everyone's issues into account. One holdout can ruin your chances for a sale.
Weak	Weak	Take more time to educate each member of the group. Identify each member's fears of making a decision and work on those fears with each.
Weak	Strong	Address everyone's issues fully. The leader will look to others for support and possibly the decision.
None		Keep asking questions to identify the decision making process. If there really is none, the situation below may apply.
Group is gathering information for absent decision-makers		Focus on educating the group on how to sell your proposal. Ask a lot of questions about the concerns and needs of the absent decision-makers.

## Appendix 12 – Account Assessment and Plan

**Account Assessment for** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Account Relationships	Assess the scope of involvement you have with this account. Is it too broad or too narrow? Are you selling the optimum range of products? Are you bringing value into the account? Is your relationship getting stronger or weaker?	
	What specific changes are suggested by your assessment of your relationship with this account?	
Sales Accomplishments	What sales accomplishments have you achieved over the past 6 months?	
	What has the company done to further cement its relationship with you?	
Sales Losses	What sales were lost in the past 6 months? Why?	
	What might you do differently to prevent such losses in the future?	
	What obstacles stand in the way of your relationship with this company (people, product, geography)?	
	What could be done to remove these obstacles?	
Opportunities	What opportunities exist with this account? (Define these broadly— business growth, new products or markets, etc.)	





## Certification Questions

1. What is the best strategy for generating exponential sales growth in your territory?
  - a. Build on your existing base
  - b. Build on your existing base and increase it
  - c. Increase your existing base
  - d. Expand your territory
2. As you prospect for new business, how many “no’s” should you expect for every “yes”?
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
3. What is the definition of an *action-based* contact?
  - a. A person who is looking for a better way
  - b. A person who has authority to buy
  - c. A person you meet at a networking event
  - d. A person who can provide useful information
4. What is the name given to a behavior that “invites a commitment”?
  - a. Close
  - b. Objection
  - c. Cue
  - d. Criterion
5. According to the Italian economist Pareto, how much of your revenue is likely to result from the top 20% of your present accounts?
  - a. 20%
  - b. 40%
  - c. 60%
  - d. 80%
6. What type of question is the following: *To what extent has your growth negatively affected the percentage of time your trucks are running?*
  - a. Information
  - b. Effect
  - c. Dissatisfaction
  - d. Solution

7. What are the criteria that individuals use to assess a buying decision called?
  - a. Buying cues
  - b. Buying incentives
  - c. Buying objectives
  - d. Buying commitments
8. What three elements are part of a good "Introductory Statement," used during networking?
  - a. Profession, expertise, and request for a meeting
  - b. Expertise, unique strengths, and sales revenues
  - c. Profession, expertise, and personal hobbies
  - d. Profession, expertise, and unique strengths
9. Which statement shows a preference for *intuition/feeling* speech?
  - a. When you care enough to send the very best
  - b. Look at the attention we've given to the machining
  - c. Here's what others say about us
  - d. You can hear a pin drop
10. When working with groups, what should you always do?
  - a. Take your best guess about who the leader is
  - b. Treat everyone as if they are the leader
  - c. Ask about the decision making process
  - d. Try to get the group size reduced to the most important people
11. What does a *Personal Mission Statement* primarily deal with?
  - a. Your goals
  - b. Your job duties
  - c. Your values
  - d. Your activities
12. What is the definition of a *dissatisfied* contact?
  - a. A person who is looking for a better way
  - b. A person who doesn't like your products
  - c. A person you meet at a networking event
  - d. A person who can provide useful information
13. Which of the following statements best creates action by the buyer?
  - a. This information is for you
  - b. I look forward to hearing from you
  - c. After you read the proposal, we will talk about...
  - d. Western Star can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_

14. Where will you find Freightliner LLC qualified lists of prospects?
- "List Access™"
  - "Tip® Listings"
  - "TIP® Access"
  - "Prospect Tips®"
15. What is the definition of a *receptive* contact?
- A person who is looking for a better way
  - A person who has authority to buy
  - A person you meet at a networking event
  - A person who can provide useful information
16. Which behavioral style would you expect to be assertive, insistent, and authoritative?
- Driver
  - Analytical
  - Amiable
  - Expressive
17. The role of procurement in larger companies:
- Is becoming more important
  - Is becoming less important
  - Is about the same as always
  - Should be avoided wherever possible
18. Which of the following questions asked by a buyer is the best *buying cue*?
- Why are your parts better than ABC's parts?
  - Why are your prices higher?
  - What is the name of your company?
  - What other products do you sell?
19. What is your best source of new business?
- Current customers of yours
  - New customers that you find
  - Competitor's customers
  - The Internet
20. Which of the following is a *soft* differentiator?
- Weight
  - Price
  - Size
  - Quality

21. What are *qualitative* and *quantitative* goals, respectively?
- a. Goals of revenue and position
  - b. Goals of position and revenue
  - c. Goals of revenue and volume
  - d. Goals of volume and revenue
22. For a higher-priced item, which of the following usually has the most positive impact on a buyer?
- a. Feature
  - b. Advantage
  - c. Benefit
  - d. Cost
23. Which statement shows a preference for *visual* speech?
- a. Deciding to buy is a matter of trust
  - b. You need to take a close look at this part
  - c. Let me tell you the reasons
  - d. Big Mac Attack!
24. What is the value of an *information question*?
- a. It leads to a commitment to buy
  - b. It tells you how the company operates
  - c. It tells the customer about your products
  - d. It tells the customer more about you
25. What is a *power question*?
- a. One that makes the prospect think
  - b. One that only you can answer
  - c. One that shows how good you are
  - d. One that has several answers