Selling Skills



Freightliner LLC

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Introduction to Selling Skills

The parts department is a "selling machine." Everything about it is (or should be) designed to help produce sales: the facilities, computers and inventory support, the people, their individual capabilities, the processes they use to acquire parts, and especially the manner in which they reach and respond to customers. As a selling machine, the parts department is a shopping environment with knowledgeable people inside (counterpeople), on the telephone (telemarketers), and on the road (outside parts salespeople).

Good parts salespeople are *order makers* not *order takers*. They are advisors, not delivery people. They are involved in the trucking industry. Good parts salespeople see their occupation as a career. They establish good relationships with customers, provide smart advice, and are considered partners, as well as suppliers, to the trucking business. They are in it for the long haul. It's an important and rewarding responsibility.

It is not possible in one module to provide information on every important part of selling. Topics such as time and territory management, prospecting, and how to build a territory are not covered here. This module focuses exclusively on effective selling skills useful to every parts salesperson whether they work behind the counter, on the telephone, or sell on the outside.

Answers to the certification questions at the end of this module are readily found within its contents.

How This Module Can Help You

The parts salesperson is on the frontline...the dealership's link to the customer. Whether inside at the parts counter, on the outside visiting customers, or calling customers on the phone, the parts salesperson is the true contact—the face, the voice, and the personality of the dealership.

The dealership's reputation is built by its sales force. As a salesperson, you represent the dealership. You are the real, live person responding to each customer's needs...and the lightning rod when a customer is disappointed or angry.

This module introduces proven selling skills you can master to become more effective and productive. Learn how to:

- Increase your own confidence and capability.
- Rise to a higher level of competence.
- Increase earning power.
- Build your career.
- Gain greater satisfaction and great feelings of accomplishment.
- Improve skills to deliver the right parts that best fit each customer's need.

A business succeeds or fails based on the capabilities of its salespeople. Selling professionals are seldom out of a job because competent salespeople are in high demand. Companies are looking for salespeople who demonstrate true selling capability. Among truck dealerships, salespeople are even more significant because dealerships, as competitors, offer many of the same parts. One true difference is in the quality of the people discussing, describing, and offering those parts. Salespeople make the difference.

The skills a person learns in professional selling help in other areas of life. A good salesperson is a good listener who asks interesting questions and engages others. Good selling skills will make you more effective, comfortable, and engaging in any conversation. These skills will serve you well in social situations, in family discussions, and in any conversational setting.

Skills for Effective Selling

Relationships Are Everything

In today's competitive marketplace, customer loyalty is critical. Strictly from a business standpoint, it is less expensive to maintain existing customers than to generate new ones. Loyal customers keep a dealership thriving. The primary objective is to develop long-term relationships, not short-term profits. Win a customer for life by eliminating dissatisfactions that might occur during interactions at the dealership. A professional, competent, customer-service image is vital to that cause.

This means the dealership:

- Treats customers as assets and partners, not as adversaries to be manipulated or conditioned to accept a lower standard of service.
- Considers its parts salespeople as consultants and encourages them to be more knowledgeable, more attentive to customer needs, and to take the time to build relationships with customers.
- Emphasizes its activities with substance, not glorified public relations, and delivers real value to each customer with every interaction.

Where's the Selling Magic?

Effective selling is the result of preparation and practice. Like a gifted athlete, a "natural" salesperson may have some natural ability to care about people, appear calm, and stay organized. That only takes them a short way. The skills for effective selling are consciously learned and based on tried-and-true principles. Here are the top five skills:

- **Sincerity sells.** The stereotype of a fast-talking, hard-driving salesperson was never true. It confused passion with talking fast and intensity with pressure. Nobody likes a hard sell.
- Demonstrate true interest. Trust is earned, not owned. The professional salesperson is more
 interested in hearing what a customer has to say than in steering the customer towards a sale
 too quickly. You can't fake interest, but you can listen long enough to get interested.
- **Know your product.** If there is any magic to selling it's the passion that comes from being a problem solver that puts the right solution in the customer's hands.
- Talk benefits. Always aim to describe "what's in it for the customer." Explain the benefits, not just features. A feature is "what it is" but a benefit is "why it fits this customer's need." Use your knowledge of features to personalize the benefits to the customer.
- **Listen. Listen.** A good listener knows when to ask the right questions. This key principle links together the other four skills because listening will equip you to address the customer's need by showing how your product delivers the benefits he or she is looking for.

Customers are drawn to benefits because benefits make features come alive. They can feel benefits. Features are points that describe a product from the outside. Get inside. Deliver the benefits. The key is to listen, probe, and ask the right question so you know what benefit will stir their interest.

Customers Love to Hear Benefits...

- Saves time
- Saves money
- Improves productivity
- Increases convenience
- Reduces maintenance
- Adds style, comfort, or "attitude"
- Generates recognition or prestige
- Improves or increases safety
- Increases enjoyment
- Increases performance
- Leverages existing things in new ways

... Make Sure They Hear Them.

Start Fresh with Each Customer

Customers come to you because they need something. They may need information, a specific part, a solution to a problem, or any combination. They're wondering if you'll have the right part, if it will be at a fair price, and if there will be someone pleasant to help them quickly and competently. Keep this in mind every time you greet a customer.

Counterpeople	Outside Parts Salespeople	Telemarketers
Coming to the dealership takes time out of their schedule. They want the right answers, fast. Give them service "plus" a little extra that makes the trip not only worthwhile, but improves their day.	You are a resource who has been given the consideration to be included in their operation. Add value every moment you're in their space. Be a champion for their needs as you work on their behalf.	A smile on your face produces a friendlier voice. Those calling you should have your full attention. Those taking your call should receive your full respect. Don't waste their time. Get to the point.

Customers Desire Salespeople Who Are ...

- Honest and possess high integrity
- Accessible
- Enthusiastic
- Good communicators
- Knowledgeable
- Organized
- Always following up
- Ready to serve

...Deliver These Qualities Every Time.

Master the Basic Skills

How the Selling Process Works

The basic selling process is simple and universal. The more a person masters the process, the greater the level of success. Basic selling involves these steps:

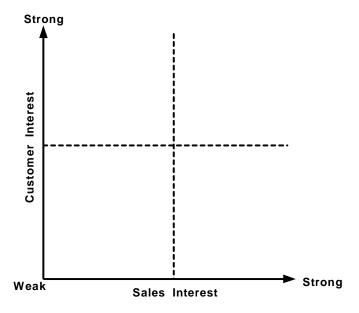
- Acknowledge the customer
- Listen
- Ask questions
- Present features through benefits
- Respond to objections
- Close the sale

Professional selling is essentially a cycle of listening and responding—a conversation that the salesperson controls but does not dominate. A salesperson's passion produces enthusiasm. Results come when that passion (strength of belief) is directed by a strong interest in the customer as well as the sale.

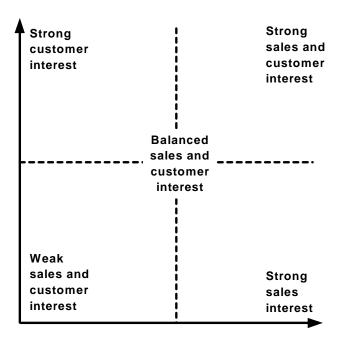
Where Are You as a Salesperson?

Where are you in this grid? Are you focused on helping customers or on making the sale? What passion drives you?

Based on how enthusiastic you feel about helping people and how driven you are to make a sale, place an "X" on the quadrant below where you think your customer focus is positioned.



Now, look at where you positioned yourself on the grid and review the general descriptions below.



Interest Usually Drives the Selling Approach

- Strong customer interest. This individual takes to heart what the customer says, thinks, and wants without thinking about the monetary aspect of the work. The people-focused salesperson sees the customer as a friend, and generally uses an emotional bond to make the sale.
- **Strong sales and customer interest.** This individual has a problem-solving focus to determine what each customer needs and fits products and services to meet those needs.
- Strong sales interest. This individual considers the monetary aspect for his/her personal interest and that of the dealership. A person who just wants to make the sale with no interest in the customer is likely to be pushy, aggressive, and offensive.
- Weak sales and customer interest. This individual has little interest in making sales or meeting the needs of the customer.
- Balanced sales and customer interest. This individual tends to be technique focused and
 relies on proven techniques. This person motivates the customer with personality and product
 features.

When salespeople understand their own source of motivation, they can maximize their "natural" strengths and learn to incorporate the characteristics of other strengths to become highly competent. Technical or product knowledge skills combined with non-technical aspects or soft skills produce a well-rounded, professional salesperson. The more you do it, the better you get at it. It begins with having the right attitude.

Present a Positive Attitude

Don't confuse attitude with "how you feel." The professional salesperson—and, in fact, any mature individual—has learned to hold personal feelings in check when dealing with daily life. A positive attitude becomes second nature and includes qualities people admire in others—like patience, level-headedness, and steadiness. In fact, these words describe a class of people who know how to keep their feelings in check.

Here are some ways to maintain an attitude that people find attractive and positive:

- Leave your ego at home. Selling is not about you. It's about the customer and how your products and services can support that customer.
- Present a service mentality that invites input and strives to be helpful.
- Look professional. Pay attention to your appearance: trimmed and combed hair, scrubbed hands and fingernails, clean face, teeth and body, pressed clothes, and well-kept shoes. Few people ever mention poor hygiene, but everyone notices it! This is the first impression that happens before any words are exchanged. Make it a good impression.
- Approach the customer in a way that feels natural. If it doesn't seem natural to you, it probably feels forced or insincere to the person you're greeting.
- Greet and start the conversation. Don't wait for the customer to fill in the silence. Instead, engage the person with something as simple as saying, "Is there any way I can help?"
- Be aware of your own state of mind. This is called "self-management." It's what you do in your head to control your emotional responses, and maintain a balanced outlook.
- Make eye contact. Learn to talk with a smile. It changes the quality of your voice.
- Call the customer by name as soon as you learn the name.
- Be positive, friendly, and courteous. Enthusiasm is the natural result of being interested and passionate about what you do. A positive outlook reinforces enthusiasm.
- Never talk down to a customer. Watch for signs of interest (a nod of the head), boredom (eyes wandering), or disagreement (arms crossed over the chest).
- A hard sell is always a turn-off. Never do it. Don't become combative. Don't interrupt. Never point a finger.
- Don't confuse being busy with being productive. If you return to the same five-minute task three times, determine if you're wasting time and letting distractions run your work.
- Be flexible.
- Take responsibility for parts orders. Take things personally, as if your reputation is on the line (it is!). Follow up on every commitment, promise, or agreement you make.

Principle of Reciprocity

It is human nature to give back what we've been given. For example, if you start out believing in someone's intelligence, that person is subconsciously obligated to believe the first thing you say. On the other hand, if you start out saying to yourself, "I really like working with you," it is very likely that the other person will feel this in your body language and tone and feel that they like working with you!

One of the best ways to apply the reciprocity principle is to ask many questions and listen attentively to the answers.

Practice Phone Etiquette			
Counterpeople	Outside Parts Salespeople	Telemarketers	
Greet warmly, with a smile over the phone; be listening carefully from the start.	Have a purpose for your call, a reason that stimulates positive response from the prospect.	Have a goal for the call. Be clear so that the prospect understands the reason for the call. This builds trust.	
Give the customer on the line your complete attention.	Ask if this is a convenient time ("to talk to you about") and embed your offer in your request for a moment of their time.		
Be straightforward and look for ways to make this a repeat customer.	Be even more concise than when face-to-face with a customer. Use the time in a meaningful way; get to the heart of things quickly.		
Be sure to let the customer know the scope and range of your offerings. Present any promotions that have an appropriate link.			
Don't rush, don't mumble, don't hassle, and don't argue!			

I. Are you demonstrating a professional approach?		
	YES	NO
• Do you feel you are there to serve others—technicians and customers?		
Do you treat customers as partners, not opponents?		
• Do you feel natural, comfortable, and in control when you greet people?		
Do you look people in the eye and talk with a smile?		
 Do you greet people and start the conversation right away? 		
 Do you call customers by name and always ask for their name? 		
• Do you present products by their benefits, by how they help customers?		
 Do you spend more time listening than talking, particularly at first? 		
• Do you work to solve the customer's problems and hear their needs?		
• Do you feel responsible for making every transaction smooth and complete?		
Every "Yes" answer is a step in the right direction. Add up your "Yes" answers total in the first column of the Performance Chart on page 30.	and rec	cord the

Establish Rapport

Professional salespeople are good communicators. They make a connection. In addition, they connect with others because they respond by taking cues from the customer. They modify their behavior to best reflect the customer's frame of mind. Here are some basic cues to gather:

- Familiarity. A salesperson reacts differently if the customer is internal (a technician or truck salesperson) or external (a visiting customer), or somebody new. It's only natural to be more or less familiar. The point is, never be too familiar with any customer, internal or external, and never be too formal. Take your cues from the customer and stay within the boundaries they set. In addition, never take that relationship for granted. Always look for cues each time.
- **Mental state.** It usually only takes a moment to determine what condition a customer is in—relaxed, angry, demanding, or uncertain. Successful salespeople can alter their behavior style to accommodate the needs and emotional state of each customer.
- Behavior style. People generally fall into one of four general behavior styles based on the pace
 they work at and where they put the importance of people and tasks. Good salespeople quickly
 recognize a general behavior style and respond in a manner that satisfies the person who is
 projecting that style.

RELATIONSHIP PRIORITY

	Amiable	Expressive	
	Wants to be liked	Friendly	
	Avoids confrontation	Easy around people	
SLOW	Seems disorganized	Comfortable and warm	FAST
PACE	Analytical	Driver	PACE
	Needs details, wants logic	Gets right to the point	
	Relates to ideas, not people	Fast worker, abrupt	
	Will not be rushed	Quick decision maker	

TASK PRIORITY

The table below provides clues on how to "read" a behavior style and what would be an appropriate response. Remember, the professional salesperson is flexible and able to shift gears to meet each customer's style.

It is unprofessional to dominate the customer by enforcing your style. Nor is it necessary for you to be "better at" the behavior than they are. All that does is create a dissatisfied customer who remembers a bad experience. Instead, respond in a way that supports the customer's style.

Behavior Style	Their Approach	Your Response
Amiable	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.
Analytical	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.
Expressive	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).
Driver	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.

Listen First

Patience is a key selling principle. As long as a customer is in front of you and talking with you, there is an opportunity to sell. Here are some ways to prepare for, develop, and make the most of every conversation.

	Counterpeople	Outside Parts Salespeople	Telemarketers		
Eliminate distractions.	Focus on the person in front of you. If you are the only one handling the phone, excuse yourself, ask the caller to hold, and return to the customer.	Have your opening recommendation or promotions in mind. Focus on this customer and the person you're greeting. Clear away thoughts about the day.	Clear the desk of distractions, focus on the voice in your ear, start fresh and stay amiable, clear away all thoughts or emotional residue from the last call.		
Recognize the customer's world and problems.	Note any discomfort, unease, how they may be carrying anything in their hands. Ask.	Be aware of the mood of the operation. Is it different, more chaotic, less frenzied?	Listen for stress, a rushed or hurried voice, noise, or distractions in the background.		
Listen more than you talk.	Nod frequently. Don't interrupt. Be brief and precise with questions.	Determine how much time the customer has. Present accordingly. Allow time to discuss.	Use verbal cues to show you're listening but not interrupting.		
Know the custome	er, adapt to where they are com	ing from. Pace your presentation	on to their pace.		
Identify what the o	customer is truly asking for. Bu	ild rapport and trust.			
Look for invisibles.	Body language such as looking down (unsure), clenched fist (disagree), jerky movement (not happy), hands over mouth (feels interrupted), or fast nodding (feels rushed). Listen for quick intakes of breath, hands mufflin phone, other signs of disagreement or distraction.		of breath, hands muffling phone, other signs of disagreement or		
Ask the right questions, give the customer time—especially when it's busy. The ability to make the right recommendations is generally based on the ability to ask the right questions.					
Ask open-ended questions. (They cannot be answered "yes" or "no" and usually start with who, what, when, where, or how.) They momentarily give away control and give the customer control.					
Use closed-ended questions to regain control. Closed-ended questions help you get specific details, end the conversation promptly, or even close a sale. ("Would you like red or yellow?") They also limit your ability to find out more so be careful.					
	Ask information questions. They can be either open- or closed-ended. Use them to get the facts. Use them to help you discover and understand the situation.				
Ask opinion quest	ions to check your customer's	feelings. ("Would afternoon de	elivery be convenient?")		
Encourage, reinfor	ce, and stay open minded.				
	soon when there's a buying sig				

I. Are you an active, effective listener?		
	YES	NO
Do you detect and respond to a person's mood or approach?		
Are you aware of the amiable, expressive, analytical, or driving person?		
Are you flexible? Do you adapt to the customer's pace and style?		
Do you eliminate distractions in order to focus exclusively on the person?		
Do you have a positive way to handle more than one person at a time?		
Are you watching for body language and responding to what you see?		
Do you think carefully about questions to make them precise and clear?		
Do you use open-ended questions to get people beyond "yes" and "no?"		
Are you aware of how to use types of questions to control a conversation?		
Do you concentrate on what the other person has to say before you think about what you want to say next?		
very "Yes" answer is a step in the right direction. Add up your "Yes" answers	and rec	cord

Continually Improve Aptitude

Attitude is how a person acts. Aptitude is what a person knows. Having both good attitude and good aptitude make a salesperson easy to work with and sought after for advice.

Just as there are ways to maintain the right attitude, there are ways to develop great aptitude. Here are some "aptitude builders."

- Know your product. Develop greater technical expertise, know related parts, understand how
 a truck works mechanically, and familiarize yourself with common service or maintenance
 requirements and all the needed parts. Study and master Freightliner LLC PartsExpert
 Modules 1-7.
- Reach past PartsPro[®]. Develop the expertise to look up a part by its model number and year. Do not rely on PartsPro or asking the customer for the serial number. Customers will not necessarily know the serial number. The ability to assist them in any way demonstrates a desire to help the customer beyond simply taking an order. This adds real value for the customer.
- **Know the competition.** Know the weaknesses of your competitors (without putting competitors down) such as fewer hours of operation, lower service levels, not as much training, or not as responsive. You never know when a customer will ask you to defend yourself and you should be able to, proudly.
- Go beyond benefits. Top performers stress benefits and offer evidence to support product benefits—anecdotes, comparisons, testimonials, statistics, magazine articles, and technical bulletins. These demonstrate a seasoned parts person who likes talking about parts and trucks.
- Create interest. Use knowledge to bring value to every interaction. Add insight about a part, a service approach, maintenance savings, or an interesting fact. This shows how well versed you are and will make you a sought-after parts expert.
- **Keep a personal notebook.** Many successful counterpeople maintain a personal notebook filled with things they want to remember such as:
 - Notes on customers such as their names and special requirements
 - Odd parts look-ups
 - System glitches
 - Memorable ideas or approaches
 - Recent changes
 - Quirks of a particular supplier or product line

Keep your own notebook and write down any helpful information you come across. It can become a valuable "intellectual asset." Use this tool to establish your selling edge.

Know Your Recommendations

Professional parts salespeople offer advice, have a complete understanding of the product, and recognize the right things to do, perhaps more than any other person talking with a customer. This makes the salesperson not just a source for parts, but also a resource for recommendations. Use this knowledge to add value.

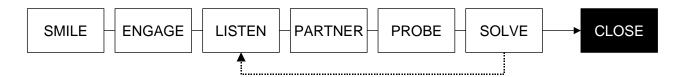
- **Talk benefits, not features.** Discuss the product from the customer's perspective, what the product does for the customer, not just what it is.
- **Believe in your products.** Be competent at explaining their value (benefits) and the value of related parts that might also be needed to do the job right.
- Be concise. Don't waste time, but don't rush.
- Complete the job. Confirm the discussion, summarize, and check for agreement. A parts sales pro does more than hand over a requested item. Extra aptitude and attitude make a memorable difference to keep customers coming back.

II. Are you building your aptitude and gaining knowledge?		
	YES	NO
Are you comfortable with how a truck operates how its parts work?		
Can you find a part the hard way, without the serial number?		
Do you know how competitive dealerships operate and their weaknesses?		
Do you make it a habit to read up on parts from many sources?		
Do you have people coming to you with problems or questions to solve?		
Is there someone you look to who's a real "parts guy" with answers?		
Do you know enough about the products you sell to back your recommendations up with facts and solid reasoning?		
Do you always take a feature and show its benefit to the customer?		
Are your discussions concise and benefits-oriented? Do you have a lively give-and-take with the customer?		
Have you completed all of the available PartsExpert modules?		

Always Get to the Close

Knowing *when* to ask for the order is the secret to getting a close to the sale. The salesperson who applies the universal principles of the selling process will almost always reach a close naturally. That's because the close is the natural outcome of the selling process, drawing both the buyer and the seller to that conclusion.

To review in the simplest of terms, this is the selling process:



If you are not sure if it is time to ask for the order, use verification questions to determine the prospect's opinion. For example, ask, "In your opinion, do you believe that...?" and go on from there.

The goal is to help someone come to a decision, not push them. People don't like to make a decision because they are afraid of making a mistake. It's human nature. The salesperson's job is to make the customer's decision easier by problem solving and offering the right advice and answers. If the customer disagrees, you have just uncovered an objection...and the selling process continues.

Always be brief, stay positive, and assume the customer will buy. To stimulate a close, offer a choice such as, "Would you like to pay by check or credit card?" At the conclusion, express your appreciation for the customer's time. Be sure to follow up on your promises.

Buying Signals			
Counterpeople Outside Parts Salespeople Telemarketers		Telemarketers	
Buyer says positive things, expresses sudden increased interest, summarizes, or plays back what you just said.			
Sudden physical reaction; no longer crosses arms or legs, smiles, leans back, or opens hands with palms outward.		Large but not forceful sigh, calmer breathing, smile in the voice.	
Friendly or friendlier expression, hand to chin. Smile in the voice.		Smile in the voice.	
Picks up product or reexamines product or sets down product and makes eye contact. Asks about price, freight brea or delivery speed.		Asks about price, freight breaks, or delivery speed.	
Asks specific questions about pro	oduct such as pack size, quantity bre	eaks, and shipping weight.	

Use these signals to reach a close that may only be a "sub-close" as you move on to make other recommendations or because the customer shows an interest in something else.

	YES	NO
Do you use a process that brings a customer to a decision?		
Are you patient? Do you keep responding to customer questions and ideas?		
Do you find it easy and simple to bring a customer to making a decision?		
Do customers seem ready to make a decision when you move to a close?		
Do you like making a close and coming to completion?		
Does it feel smooth, not abrupt, when you ask for the order?		
Do you watch body language to reveal the customer's state of mind?		
Do you act on the customer's body language and vocal cues to help a customer come to a decision?		
Are you comfortable coming to a conclusion or agreement with the customer and then continuing on with the discussion/interaction?		
Do your interactions with customers feel complete and properly ended?		

When a Customer Objects

Be Prepared in Advance

No salesperson could ever force somebody to buy his/her product unless it was the last one on the planet or the only source around. A sale is made when the conviction of the seller enters the heart of the buyer. This means that the professional salesperson knows how to be patient, understanding, and convincing. Selling is like diplomacy. It gently wins over others to your ideas. Keep this in mind when a customer has an objection.

- Recognize objections as a request for more information. An objection is a sign that the customer is still interested. Don't overreact, don't oversell, and don't talk too much. This is not a battle of wits, but a clarification of features and their benefits. There are many ways to lose a sale—impatience, talking down, bad attitude, poor answers, or not paying attention—but answering an objection calmly isn't one of them.
- **Practice self-management**. Self-management is the conversation you have with yourself, what you say to yourself to keep your emotions in check. Look at a difficult situation as a challenge, an opportunity to excel. The table below offers some self-management techniques.

	Self-Management Techniques
Recognize the "hot-wire" feeling.	Be aware of your reactions. Practice recognizing when you are no longer relaxed but feel confrontational, intense, hot-faced, or uncomfortable. Try to recognize this as early as possible when it happens. (You will always know after it happens. Work backwards to recognize the start of that feeling.)
Listen to what you are telling yourself.	Spend a few seconds becoming alert to the situation inside of you. For example, tell yourself, "The customer wants more information," or "This is getting interesting."
Take a breath.	Discretely take a breath and tell yourself that you need to regain control of yourself and of the event. This is like the old "count-to-ten" anger rule, but it is done in the space of a breath. In fact, after a little practice, it appears to the other person as if you are simply gathering your thoughts in order to respond.
Don't go on an inner tirade.	Instead, pay attention to the calm words you are telling yourself. Focus on stepping down from the "hot-wire" feeling.

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• Pick up cues. Here are some common ways that customers make vague objections:

"I don't care."	means the customer is not interested because you may not have found a real need. Probe deeper and listen carefully.
"Not right now."	is a delay tactic. Find out why the customer is hesitant.
"I don't think so."	is a vague way of avoiding further discussion. Move on to another topic or recommendation or probe to find out the real issue by asking, "Are you saying you don't think it's right for you?"
"I don't need that."	is a negative reaction to your recommendation. Make sure you show how your recommendation benefits the customer.
"I don't have time now."	may be a way to avoid making a decision. Find out if the customer is concerned about the clock or the proposition. If the customer sticks around for a moment of small talk, you might find a way back in. Avoid any hard sell.

Use Objections as a Selling Tool

Customers object in order to get more information, to make a point or to start an argument. Consider an objection as a show of interest, not a battle of wits. Include the customer as a partner so that, together, you can search for the answer to the customer's needs. The table below shows a typical give and take. Use it as a starting point to build your own approach for handling objections.

Customer Says	You Say	Why You Say It
"Oh, sorry to say, but I don't agree with you."	"Well, I'm not sorry. I'd like to hear why."	This is a way to acknowledge the customer's right to object and indicate your willingness to have the customer be free to express reservations. Empathize. Put yourself in the customer's place.
"There's no need for any of this, I just want the basic package."	"You obviously have a reason for saying that. May I ask what it is?"	Ask for clarification. This is the time to listen without any preconceived notions—even if you have a great comeback. Right now, the task is to find out what the customer needs to hear, what benefit would appeal most.
"I can't"	"Is there something holding you back?"	This means the customer is confronted by factors out of the customer's control and together you may be able to solve any issues about resources, a disagreeing peer or superior, or a commitment to a competitor.
"I object to"	"Am I hearing you right that you don't like the deluxe package?"	Don't directly defend against objections. Change the objection into a question that you can answer and keeps the customer involved so you can find the problem. It will either be:
		A misconception (clarify and explain)
		Skepticism (provide examples and real evidence)
		 Perceived drawbacks (show how advantages outweigh disadvantages)
		A legitimate complaint (respond to it and create a plan to address it)
		Find out if the customer truly objectsare they looking for a solution or are they insincere and no solution exists. This is an elegant way of dealing with any legitimate objection by changing it into a question such as, "Am I hearing you right that?"
"Here's why"	"You make a good point there."	Admit to any valid point and move on to a compensating factor such as a new process, service, or system.

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Develop Strategies for Reducing Objections

Objections are not something to avoid because they are part of any conversation, even ones you have with friends. However, customers usually raise objections because they haven't heard the information they need to hear to be convinced. To pique the customer's interest and close the sale more efficiently, practice using these strategies every time you talk with a customer:

- Concentrate on asking questions instead of making statements.
- Make sure you understand the customer's needs before making a recommendation.
- Listen carefully to what the customer tells you.
- Relate your recommendation to the customer's expressed need.
- Use terms the customer understands.
- Focus on Freightliner LLC benefits, never put down the competition.
- Don't ask the customer to make a decision until you're sure the customer is ready.

Take Control Over Price

Price is only one of at least a dozen reasons why people make a purchasing decision. In fact, price is usually a small consideration because differences in price are usually small compared to differences in other qualities. Most people buy on a combination of several things. Very few decide solely on price.

Product Characteristics People Want

- Quality
- Reliability
- Functionality
- Consistency
- Uniqueness
- Availability
- Familiarity
- Brand identity
- Pride/ego
- Meets specification
- Variety
- Durability
- Appearance
- Price

People buy value, not price. The individual who seems to make every decision based on the price tag has either not been introduced to all the hidden costs and expenses of a bottom-line decision, or has not been shown the benefits of a superior product that meets their need better.

In the table below are some examples of price objections and how to respond to them.

Price Objection	Sales Approach
"It's too expensive."	Is this an expense limitation? If so, show that the benefit of the higher priced item saves money overall, such as in product life cycle costs (longer life), reduced maintenance, less deterioration, etc.
"It's just a"	Compare items to show the superiority of your recommendation from any of the dozen characteristics that draw the customer's interest. Add to the benefit list.
"My boss would never let me"	Prepare a point-by-point list for the customer to take back. Better yet, see if you can talk to the boss on the phone or arrange a meeting.
"I don't want to pay for the brand name."	Present the manufacturer's case. R&D, superior fit and function, warranties, guaranties, and stability. ("You know XYZ will be around next year because they've got a name that has stood the test of time.")
"You're always too high."	This is usually an off-hand remark intended to rattle you but not delivered with much punch. One way to deflect it is to focus on "how high is too high?" Turn the discussion to the cost of a part that breaks down, wears out too early, functions poorly, and puts other elements of the system at risk. Bring out the value of the dealership's commitment to the owner-operator, to being responsive and having all the right parts, to support trucking companies in the area, etc.
"I need a price break."	Look for ways to do this by increasing the quantity, including more items in the order, offering a discount for immediate cash payment. Show the "hidden" price breaks the customer is already enjoying such as free delivery, stocking support, and free advice that saves money, etc.
"What's your best price?"	Price is not the debate here, value is. Change the discussion by asking, "Are you asking me what is the best value?" Then move on to describe benefits that clearly show higher value to the customer.
"I can get the exact same part at X's dealership."	Determine if it's a loss leader or a promotion designed to attract customer traffic. Talk about how much you value their business and look for ways to add value (e.g., free delivery, case quantity breaks, convenience, faster service.) Studies show that the average person will spend up to 10% more for better service. A great attitude coupled with superior aptitude produces noticeably better service.
"Forget it!"	The price-based customer is looking for value and performance compared to price. Show the customer in real numbers how value and performance produces gains or prevents losses especially if breakdown, lost productivity, lost confidence, or safety are part of the discussion.

V. Are you good at handling customer objections?		
	YES	NO
Do you stay calm inside (and out) when an objection is raised?		
Do you see objections as an opportunity to give information?		
Do you look forward to objections as a way to build a sale?		
Do you ask for clarification and listen openly before responding?		
Do you acknowledge the objection and recognize the customer for having it?		
Do you use objections as a way to find out what benefits will interest the customer most?		
Are you presenting facts and solid thinking instead of just disregarding the objection, distracting, or shifting the subject?		
Do you truly try to understand the customer's needs before making a recommendation?		
Do you see price as just one of many product characteristics?		
Do you help customers recognize value and performance as part of determining the best price?		
Every "Yes" answer is a step in the right direction. Add up your "Yes" answortal in the fifth column of the Performance Chart on page 30 of this module.		cord the

Angry Customers: Make-It-Happen Moments

Angry customers present the opportunity to turn an unhappy, dissatisfied person into a loyal, satisfied return buyer. Statistics show that there is an 82% chance of a return sale when a customer's complaint is handled quickly and pleasantly. In fact, customers have *greater* loyalty to a company where a problem is effectively solved than to companies where they have never had a problem. That's right—resolving a customer's complaint actually makes that person more loyal than if there never was a complaint.

That's why these are called "Make-It-Happen Moments." They offer a way to create loyalty and build repeat business, not lose it. It all depends on how you respond to the irate customer. Here are proven methods to reduce conflict and diffuse anger. Use them at work...and in life.

- Note the behavior. Angry people can be verbally abusive, spit words, swear, blame, become
 confrontational, demand evidence, and act like a bully. By taking note of their behavior, you
 initially separate yourself from it. It's their anger, not yours.
- **Step back.** Give them more space if possible. Avoid leaning forward, folding your arms, or making sudden movements that they may be perceive as aggressive.
- **Remove yourself.** This is their fight. They are already raging. Say to yourself, "The customer's mood has nothing to do with me," or, "This is an interesting challenge."
- Validate them. Let them know it's okay to be angry. Give them your total attention while they
 vent their feelings. If it seems that you or someone in the dealership did make a mistake, don't
 set up defenses. Instead, say to yourself, "I made a mistake, I've learned from mistakes, I can
 help correct this, and I can help this customer."
- Show empathy immediately. Instantly—before you even really know anything—indicate a willingness to listen and an interest in resolving the situation. Say to them, "I'm sorry this happened," or "That's terrible, let's get it fixed!"

Empathy Is Not Sympathy

Empathy = Understanding how the person feels.

Sympathy = Feeling what the person feels.

Do not share the feeling (sympathy). It will make it impossible for you to respond calmly and rationally.

- Repeat the situation as the customer sees it. See the situation from the customer's point of view. Ask questions calmly to confirm information. Where possible assume blame. The problem remains unsolved as long as you stay busy trying to assign blame, and especially if you're looking to pin it back on the customer. So, assume blame to help diffuse the customer's anger and move quickly to correct the situation.
- **Speak gently.** When you speak, keep a low pitch, soft volume, and slower rate. Don't talk down, weakly, hesitantly, or in a whisper. An angry person may perceive any of these as an attempt to control. However, do not rise to the same level or volume as the angry person. Don't try to "out shout" them. Use your normal—if a bit more gentle—voice.
- **Make it happen.** Use the moment to resolve complaints and create a satisfied customer. Be tireless in the customer's behalf and you will be rewarded with a loyal customer.
- **Finish the job.** Relay information to necessary internal departments. If a process needs to be changed, help create that change. If the customer needs more answers, follow up. If possible, within a few days. Surprise the customer with something extra—a small gift certificate, a card of apology that includes a free service offering from the dealership. It isn't the size of the gift. It's the thoughtfulness behind it that matters.

I. Are you good at diffusing angry customers?	YES	NO
Do you give an angry person a little more room and step back?		
Do you hear them without getting angry? Do you remain calm?		
Do you immediately show that you want to help them and get it fixed?		
Do you take on the blame and move forward to problem solve?		
Do you use your probing skills to explore the situation quickly?		
Are you open to hearing what the customer has to say?		
Do you speak in a normal, but more gentle, voice?		
Do you see even a shouting customer as a loyal, future buyer?		
Do you keep the customer blameless, and not try to prove them wrong?		
Do you follow up with the customer, including an unexpected "extra?"		

The Power of Incremental Selling

Anyone can take a parts order or deliver it. The professional parts seller goes a step beyond—not because it's good for business (producing added sales), but because it's right for the customer. There are several different methods of incremental ("extra") selling. However, they all share the same purpose: to give the customer greater choice, more options, and better service.

The table below illustrates three of the more common forms of incremental selling.

Selling Form	Purpose	Approach	Examples
Related selling	To suggest items that are related to the one the customer is purchasing.	Keep it simple. Do it before the invoice is written up. This is a service to the customer because suggested related items may help him/her avoid another trip, an inferior result, or lost time/money due to an incomplete solution.	Compressor replaced: - Air dryer cartridge - Governor - Safety value - Hoses and fitting
Selling "up"	To draw to a higher price or larger quantity or size.	Avoid a "good-better-best" approach. Instead, point out the value and performance of each level. Describe these in benefits to the customer. Draw from all the things people want in their products, especially convenience, time savings, bragging rights, and brand perceptions. If you start at the top, do not do it by comparing (and running down) the lesser item. Doing so might eliminate the entire package from consideration. (Who wants to buy the inferior choice?)	Replacement brake drums and shoes: - Replace linings on all wheels - Check wheel seals, bearings, and slack adjuster Replacing alternator: - Drive belt - Pulley - New, not rebuilt - Service check
Cross selling	To introduce new items or promotional features to support the customer's business but not related to the original purchase.	Consider this as a service to the customer, a responsibility to provide new information or save the customer money through sales or push programs (check the Alliance brand catalog, direct mail, or other special promotions). It's always a good idea to cross sell the dealership's service department—specials, specialties, services, and new capabilities—by showing how they benefit the customer.	Replacement hood: - Damaged piece - Approved adhesive - Dressed hood upsell Replacement grille: - New bug screen - New winterfront Recommend new floor coverings when renewing pads on pedals.

A professional parts salesperson doesn't just "take an order" or "deliver an order." That's only going half way. The job isn't done until the customer has been given every opportunity to hear about related products, higher performance/higher value products, or other products that might improve the customer's own trucking business. Incremental selling is good customer service.

Selling Tools

Freightliner LLC routinely supplies marketing tools to directly support parts salespeople in the dealership. Be familiar, comfortable, and current with these materials. Use them to improve your performance and deliver better service to customers.

The table below briefly describes a few that can help you get smarter in a hurry.

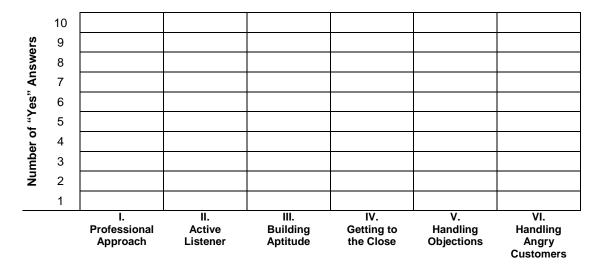
Marketing Tool	Purpose	
Alliance Parts Catalog	This quick reference catalog provides a complete listing of Alliance brand parts and includes "PartsCaps" on strategic lines. The Alliance binder is especially useful for the price-sensitive prospect.	
All-Makes Parts Guide	This pocket-sized reference guide lists vendors and product lines available through Freightliner LLC Customer Support. This is a great reference tool for OPS and counterpeople because it helps identify alternative suppliers. It also makes an excellent sales piece when offering recommendations to parts customers.	
Direct Mail Flyers	AdDirect, Frequent Flier, and Star Flier mailers highlight a changing selection of high maintenance parts and promoted items. Flyers are customized for individual participating dealerships to feature selected parts and service specials. This program benefits Freightliner, Sterling, and Western Star dealers by advertising and promoting their aftermarket capabilities.	
EveryDay Low Price Catalog	This popular quick reference tool presents a complete range of fast-moving commodity parts at everyday low prices. The catalog is an excellent way to build incremental sales and demonstrate the dealership's product depth and competitiveness at the same time. An end-customer version is also available that the dealership can distribute.	
PartsCaps	This quick-reference tool provides key information on strategic supplier production. The format is well organized and easy to read so that parts salespeople can quickly learn product features, benefits, and market potential.	
Supplier Literature	An extensive selection of supplier literature and catalogs is available through Freightliner LLC Dealer Information. Order this material to improve your product knowledge—or make a sales pitch.	

Chart Your Performance

This exercise helps establish your current level of selling capability and then shows how to raise that level to become more successful as a parts salesperson. To do so, takes four steps:

- 1. Complete each of the "Check Your Department" overviews in this module. Each has ten questions. Don't be easy on yourself; answer the questions as if you're the supervisor.
- 2. Count the number of "Yes" answers for each overview in this module and mark that number in the appropriate column on the Performance Chart.
- 3. Connect the numbers to create a kind of mountain range that shows peaks and valleys of performance.
- 4. The goal is to raise everything to 100%—to be able to answer, "Yes," to all ten questions for each overview. To bring up a valley, go back to that overview and determine what you can do to turn any "No" into a "Yes."

SELLING SKILLS PERFORMANCE CHART



Summary

The parts sales professional is on the frontline of the dealership and is the real contact with customers. The dealership's reputation rests on this frontline. The attitude and aptitude of its salespeople will determine whether the dealership fails or succeeds.

The skills for effective selling help a salesperson become better in any social situation or conversation. These skills begin with the premise that relationships are everything.

A salesperson's own interests drive a selling approach that is either customer focused, sales focused or a strong balance of both. By knowing their own interest, a salesperson can make the most of his/her natural strengths and work to build upon any weaknesses in technical knowledge or non-technical "soft" or "people" skills.

Knowing how to hold personal feelings in check and present a personality that is open and engaging creates a positive attitude that is honest and interested. To make a connection with the customer, watch for cues to the customer's mental state and behavior style. Adapt to those cues so that the customer feels comfortable and significant. Smile often. Talk with a smile.

Engage the customer by listening, asking open-ended questions, probing for concerns, and offering benefits. Recognize objections as a request for more information and use them as selling tools, not as abrasive moments. Always talk about benefits whenever you mention a feature. Focus on the many different reasons people make a decision to buy. Price is the only reason that is really about value and performance. Turn an irate customer into a loyal one by stepping back, validating them, showing immediately that you want to fix the situation, and then making it happen.

Incremental selling is good customer service. Suggest items related to a customer's purchase, higher priced or larger quantities, and new or promotional items to every customer.

Certification Questions

1.	Wr	What is the primary customer objective in today's competitive marketplace?			
	b. c.	Generate new customers Develop short-term profits Develop long-term customer relationships Eliminate critical customers			
2.	Wł	What is the "magic" to selling?			
	b. c.	Sincerity sells, demonstrate interest Know your product, talk benefits Listen All of the above			
3.	Cu	stomers are drawn to because they can feel them.			
	b. c.	Hard-selling sales pitches Features Benefits Probing questions			
4.	Cu	Customers come to parts salespeople because they need something. What do they need?			
	b. c.	Information A specific part Solution to a problem All of the above			
5.	Pro	Professional selling is essentially a cycle of			
	b. c.	Listening and responding Controlling and dominating Passion and interest Features and benefits			
6.	Yo	You are most likely to present a positive attitude by			
	b. c.	Knowing how you feel Knowing how to control any situation Knowing how to hold personal feelings in check Having a chip on your shoulder			
7.	Wł	What is the "Principle of Reciprocity?"			
	a. b. c. d.	Believe in yourself, first People tend to give back what they've been given Never react to any objection, irritation, or argument What goes up must come down			

- 8. An "amiable" behavior style is demonstrated when a person:
 - a. Wants to be liked
 - b. Avoids confrontation
 - c. Is comfortable and warm
 - d. Both a and b
- 9. When a customer shows "driver" behavior what is likely to be the salesperson's BEST response?
 - a. Concentrate on step-by-step logic
 - b. Avoid eye contact, act shy
 - c. Offer small talk, let them know they're appreciated
 - d. Take immediate action; stay calm, but alert
- 10. Open-ended questions are a good technique because they:
 - a. Are a quick way to gather the facts
 - b. Cannot be answered "yes" or "no"
 - c. Give the salesperson more control
 - d. All of the above
- 11. What is the BEST way to discuss your competition with the customer?
 - a. Gently put down their weaknesses
 - b. Never discuss the competition
 - c. Defend by explaining your dealership's strengths
 - d. Subtly display your disinterest while you move to another topic
- 12. What does it mean to "go beyond benefits"?
 - Offer supporting proof of benefits from multiple sources
 - b. Explain features and advantages
 - c. Know the competition
 - d. Create interest
- 13. Which of these are buying signals?
 - a. Customer summarizes what parts person says
 - b. Customer stops making eye contact
 - c. Arms across chest, eyes looking off
 - d. All of the above
- 14. Which of these is NOT true of the "close"?
 - a. Should not be started too soon when there's a buying sign
 - b. Must always be created because it is not a natural outcome of the selling process
 - c. Can be stimulated by offering a choice in a question
 - d. Both a and b

- 15. What should you do if you are not sure if it's time for a close?
 - a. Ask the customer if they want to buy the item
 - b. Resort to small talk to give yourself time to figure it out
 - c. Use verification questions to determine the customer's stance
 - d. All of the above
- 16. The question "would you like to pay be check or credit card" is what type of question?
 - a. A closed-end question
 - b. An open-ended question
 - c. A question to stimulate a close
 - d. Both a and c
- 17. What does "self-management" mean relative to selling skills?
 - a. Doing a better job with your time
 - b. What you do to keep your emotions in check
 - c. The ability to read customer cues of behavior and style
 - d. All of the above
- 18. In general, an objection is a request:
 - a. For more information
 - b. To end the transaction
 - c. To join in debate
 - d. To buy
- 19. If during a discussion a customer says, "I don't have time now," what is usually your BEST initial response?
 - a. Thank the person and end the transaction
 - b. Go into a brief, effective hard sell
 - c. Find out if the customer is concerned about the clock or the proposition
 - d. Go to your best benefit and ask for the order.
- 20. Customers object as a way to:
 - a. Get more information
 - b. Make a point
 - c. Start an argument
 - d. All of the above
- 21. Which of these is NOT a way to reduce objections?
 - a. Listen carefully to what the customer tells you
 - b. Use terms the customer understands
 - c. Quickly ask the customer to make a decision
 - d. Concentrate on asking questions

- 22. Price is usually a small consideration in the buying process because:
 - a. Differences in price are usually small
 - b. Price is only one of at least a dozen reasons
 - c. People buy value, not price
 - d. All of the above
- 23. When a customer asks, "What's your best price?" what would be your first BEST sales approach?
 - a. Move quickly to any discounts you can offer
 - b. Look for a lower priced equivalent
 - c. Turn the discussion into one of value
 - d. Stand your ground to see if it's a bluff
- 24. Which of these is NOT a good way to react to an irate or angry customer?
 - a. Physically step back and mentally remove yourself from their fight
 - b. Validate them and let them know it's okay to be angry
 - c. Show immediate empathy by saying, "That's terrible, let's get it fixed!"
 - d. Raise your energy level and meet them head-on
- 25. "Incremental selling" is defined as:
 - a. Related selling, selling up, or cross selling
 - b. Good customer service
 - c. A way to produce more sales
 - d. All of the above

Books to Read

- Book of Excellence: 236 Habits of Effective Sales People by Byrd Baggett
- How to Become a Rainmaker: The Rules for Getting and Keeping Customers and Clients by Jeffrey J. Fox
- The One Minute Sales Person by Spencer Johnson and Larry Wilson
- The S.P.I.N. Selling Fieldbook: Practical Tools, Methods, Exercises and Resources by Neil Rackham