

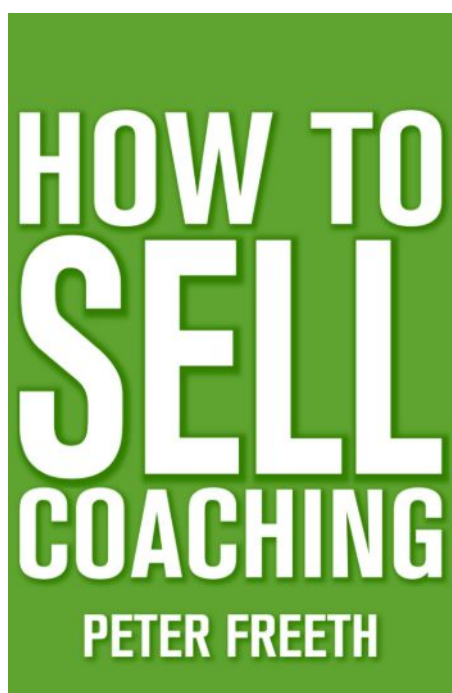


How to Sell Coaching - Selling Made Easy

For anyone running a business or providing personal services, selling is the single most important activity. If you're not selling then you have no control over who is buying from you. Learning how to sell professionally can mean generating more sales, if that's what you're looking for, and equally important are generating predictable sales and finding the right clients for you who are consistently delighted with your services. None of this happens by accident.

Good sales people are not simply born that way. No matter what product or service you're selling, you will enjoy greater success through the proven, reliable sales methodology that you'll learn in the Selling Made Easy masterclass. By applying what you learn to your work on live prospects, moving them through the sales process, you'll be able to see the results and you'll be able to measure the impact on your business as you develop your sales skills, build better sales relationships and secure more, happier clients.

Selling Made Easy is led by master coach Peter Freeth who has over 30 years experience in service sales, from major outsourcing projects right through to global corporate training and personal coaching services, provided through Peter's consulting business, Genius, for the past 25 years. Peter's innovative work in service sales is used by coaches, therapists, trainers and consultants all over the world through his book How to Sell Coaching and through this masterclass.



1: Prospecting, Lead Generation and Qualifying

Every sales conversation starts with you identifying potential clients and then focusing your time and resources on the people most likely to buy from you. Prospecting is all of the various activities you might undertake when looking for potential clients. When you get your prospecting wrong, you will be busy but your hard work won't be productive. When you get your prospecting right, finding new clients will seem effortless, and you will preserve your single most valuable resource - your time.

In this session, you will discover how to identify the right clients for you, quickly, ensuring that the service you provide is right for them.

Let's get straight into it. Most people I've known are not as good as they could be at selling because they think their job is coaching, or legal services, or hypnotherapy, or business services, or whatever, and they only start selling once they look at their bank account. The problem with this is that it takes time to find a prospect, lead them to a decision, deliver your service and get paid, so if you want to get paid today, you had to be prospecting weeks or months ago, maybe years ago.

Write down, in one sentence, what your business delivers to your customers.

Now write down what problem that solves for your customers. For example, a delivery company takes parcels from one place to another so that the customer doesn't have to use time doing it themselves.

Are you: Saving time? Saving money? Increasing value? Adding capability?

Now let's figure out where those customers are coming from.

Do you ask every customer how they found you?

Do you refine your lead generation to amplify the sources that are already working?

Write down where new customers come from, how they find you and choose to work with you.

Finally let's see what you're doing to generate prospects. A prospect is a named person who has a potential need for your products and services.

How often are you generating leads?

Website - that's not lead generation if it's passive

LinkedIn - that's not lead generation if it's passive

Network group - that's not lead generation if it's passive

Newsletter - at least you're controlling communication

Write down your main source of new prospects.

Your product or service is wonderful, and everyone is a potential customer, right? Wrong.

In principle, prospecting is easy. You identify the kind of people who are your customers, which is NOT 'everyone', then you go to where they are and tell them that you can solve their problems.

In practice, all of your competitors are doing the same thing, and if a prospect is easy to reach, they're easy to reach for everyone.

You can compete on price, quality, delivery, all kinds of things, but the problem is that these differences only give you an advantage if they are of value to the customer.

Our aim should therefore be to start the conversation earlier in the sales process than your competitors are doing. This means that you can find out earlier what the prospect values and adapt your solution to their needs. This is a far better way to exclude your competitors.

Think about your best customers - the ones that spent the most money over the longest period of time. Where did the conversation with them start?

What was it about you which gave them the confidence to buy? You can't say your quality of service, because they didn't know that until after they had bought from you. It was something in the promise that you made to them.

Write down how the conversation first started with your best customers.

One interesting way to start the conversation with a prospect is based on the knowledge that at first, they will try to self-medicate. If they're trying to solve their own problem with something you gave them, they are more likely to associate you with a potential solution when they discover that they can't do it themselves. This is why online self-service is so popular, and why content marketing works. Content marketing uses educational content to demonstrate your capability.

Write down three ways that your customers might self medicate rather than seeking your help.

- 1
- 2
- 3

We need to do two things, first, work out how to generate as many leads as possible, and second, work out how to ignore most of them. Dropping leads that aren't right for you is called qualification.

As a group, come up with 3 ideas which none of you is currently using for how you can engage your prospects earlier in the sales process, before they would otherwise admit failure and contact you.

- 1
- 2
- 3

Just to step back for a moment, how do you know that your lead generation is working? It's not by getting paid, because that takes too long to know what you did to make it happen.

The answer is by measuring your conversion rate. To do this, you have to identify the decision points in your sales process and then work out how many prospects move forwards and how many drop out at each point.



If you invest time in every person who wants to talk to you, you will be busy, and that might feel good in the short term, but it doesn't help your bank balance. It is vitally important to identify people who will not buy from you and save yourself the time and disappointment by either not talking to them, or redirecting them somewhere else. For example if someone is interested in a training course but they're saying they can't make the dates or they don't have the money, I send them to my mailing list and suggest they sign up to a free online course.

Let's work out your rules for choosing who to talk to - your qualification criteria.

We'll start with an obvious one - do they have a specific need for your product or service?

What else?

So what happens when you have a prospect who doesn't meet your qualification criteria? Do you simply not talk to them? As I said, redirect them to something which doesn't take your time to deliver.

Your natural inclination is to talk to everyone, 'just in case' and 'you never know'. You like being busy, but if you're not measuring your conversions, you can't tell the difference between busy and productive. One pays the bills, the other doesn't. When you're talking to people who aren't going to buy from you, you're not investing in the possibility that they might do, you are giving away your valuable expertise for free with no return. They will not even recommend you to others. Why would they? They don't value what you're doing enough to pay you for it.

Let's turn this around. Imagine that you are inundated with leads. Imagine you have more leads than you can cope with. Do you spend as much time on each of them, or do you prioritise?

Of course, you prioritise, you have to. Your qualification criteria are how you prioritise. You can't work out your priorities after you get busy, you have to do it before when you're thinking objectively. In turn, this helps you to focus your prospecting activities on the people more likely to meet your criteria.

When you're not busy, you'll be tempted to talk to people who aren't going to buy from you. You might think, "Well, what else am I going to do? Something might come of it" - what else you're going to do is more prospecting.

Write down, in a typical month, how many people you...

Identify who you think might have a need for your products or services:

Talk to, specifically about your products or services:

Gain information from about their needs:

Discuss pricing and availability with:

Gain their commitment to working with you:

Actually work with and get paid by:

Your time is your most valuable asset so the objective of qualifying is to reduce the number of prospects who you talk to, and therefore the time taken, to produce the number of paying customers that you need. The higher your overall conversion rate, the less time you spend in the sales process, freeing up your time to deliver your product or service. Remember, though, you can never spend zero time selling, even if you outsource your sales process to someone else.

Go back to the 'number of people' exercise above and now add in the time, in total, each activity takes.

My advice is that you need to be prospecting every day if, in the future, you want to be earning money every day. If you feel like you can't make the time for that then you have to understand two things.

First, you are a salesperson. That is your job.

Second, almost everything that you do can be a prospecting activity. Time on social media, when you're out shopping or socialising, even when you're travelling. When selling is your full time job, you can weave it into almost everything that you do.

Let's look at this from the other direction. Using the figures from the 'number of people' exercise above, write down:

How much money you want to make each month from your product or service:

How many customers that requires each month:

How many prospects you present a solution to:

How many prospects tell you about their needs:

How many prospects you start a conversation with:

How many prospects you identify:

Does that put the need for constant prospecting into perspective?

Homework:

Focus time every day on the prospecting activity which has worked best for you in the past

Identify decision points and work out your conversion rate at each one

Finalise your qualification criteria and use them to focus your prospecting

2: Starting the Conversation

If you want to sell your services, you need to have sales conversations. All too often, people who are selling service jump straight into a demonstration of the service, believing that if the client likes it, they will buy. In fact, the more of your time and expertise you give away at this stage, the less likely the client is to buy from you. When you create clear, focused and honest sales conversations, you will save yourself a lot of time and convert more clients.

In this session, you will open the conversation as a clear, focused and honest sales conversation, leaving the client in no doubt that their next step is to buy from you – or stop wasting your time!

Your client will never find out how good your service or product is until they first find out how good a salesperson you are.

You are responsible for many roles in your business - such as?

Marketing, sales, service delivery, customer service, finance, admin... and more!

You perform each of these roles at the right time for your business processes - you don't start doing your admin in the middle of a coaching session, so why are you coaching in the middle of a sales conversation?

Do you know the difference between a sales conversation and a coaching or therapy conversation?

Yes / No

Consider four stages in the customer's buying process:

Information - Decision - Buying - Owning

Information - You don't know that it exists, or what is possible, you find out

Decision - You are matching it to your needs, asking about features, guarantees

Buying - You are wondering how to get it, asking about price, availability etc

Owning - You have it in your life, you are using it, realising the benefits

You need different information at the different stages of the buying process, and so you will ask different questions. The sales person has to respond to those questions in a way which fits where the prospect is in the process.

Think back to your decision to join this workshop.

Consider: Information - Decision - Buying - Owning

What Information did you need?

How did you make your Decision?

How was the Buying process?

What's Owning it like?

At what point in this process does the sales conversation typically start for you?

Who starts the conversation?

The person asking the questions is in control!

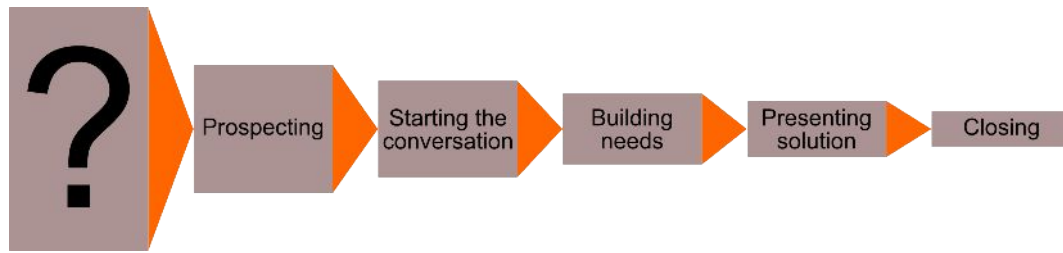
Inbound enquiry - take control by asking questions rather than responding.

Outbound prospecting - be clear about what you're looking for and offering.

Are most of your prospects inbound or outbound?

Inbound / Outbound

Handling an enquiry - the prospect contacts you to enquire about your products or services.
For a prospect to be contacting you, what must have happened before?



Write down what, logically, must have happened before the sales conversation starts.

They think that you have the solution to their problem, so they will ask you questions about it - and they will sound like buying questions but they are not. You might treat these questions as an invitation to tell them about your product or service - they are not. Information - Decision - Buying - Owning
Why are these not buying questions?

Step 1, Take control by asking questions (pen/paper)

But how do you deal with the fact that the customer's question is left hanging?

Step 0, How you answer the enquiry will influence how the prospect moves forwards.

Phone? Email? In person? Anything else?

Phone - How do you answer? How can I help you? (What are you looking for?)

Email - They will give you the info they think you need - less opportunity to question.

In person - More traction, easier to ask qualifying questions.

Step 2, Get their contact details - pretext if you need it, but this is the price they pay to have their questions answered.

Step 3, Answer their questions? Or not?

Step 4, Ask them what they want to do next / ask them if they want to commit.

Step 5, Follow up if necessary.

Handling a lead - open a conversation with someone who may be interested in buying.

For you to see them as a prospect, what must have happened before?

You think that you have the solution to their problem, so you will tend to tell them about it, even though they don't want to hear that.

Information - Decision - Buying - Owning

Why is this the wrong time to tell them about your product or service?

Which stage do we want to focus the prospect on?

How do we do that? What questions do we ask?

"Is this something that you want to solve?"

"You're describing a problem, do you actually want to solve it?"

"I can help you with this, would you be interested?"

"I can solve this problem for you, when would you like to talk about that?"

Yes - arrange a time for a proper, focused conversation.

No - you have qualified out, well done! So, why are they telling you this?

<p>Why is your prospect talking to you?</p> <p>The single most important question in a sales conversation?</p> <p>WHY NOW?</p> <p>Reveal both the need and the emotional impact.</p> <p>Let's concentrate on opening the conversation in order to make it easier to close later on.</p>
<p>Discuss your decision to join this masterclass. Why now?</p> <p>Because this was the only time available?</p> <p>Because you had nothing better to do?</p> <p>You spent money and most importantly you invested your time.</p> <p>Why now? What has happened, or what is happening?</p> <p>What is the need that you thought this masterclass could help you with?</p> <p>Why is that need important for you right now?</p>
<p>In your business, who most often starts the sales conversation?</p> <p>When the prospect starts the conversation, they know what is happening, even if they might try to avoid making a decision - because they are at the Information stage.</p> <p>When you start the conversation, how does the prospect know what's happening?</p>
<p>How do we let the prospect know that this is a sales conversation? You are selling something, and their role is to decide to buy it - or not.</p> <p>What happens if we pretend this is not a sales conversation?</p> <p>The prospect knows that we're lying!</p> <p>At best, we confuse the prospect when we reveal our true intentions. At worst, we break trust. Why would they believe anything we say after that?</p> <p>At what stage do you realise you're having a sales conversation?</p> <p>What questions might you ask which reveal this to the prospect?</p>
<p>Walk them through the process - what they need most is reassurance.</p> <p>I understand what you're asking,</p> <p>I can understand your problem or need.</p> <p>I can help you.</p> <p>What would you like to do next?</p>
<p>The next stage in the sales conversation is understanding and building their needs</p>
<p>Homework:</p> <p>Practice taking control of the first conversation by asking questions.</p> <p>Practice being honest in your sales conversations. You're not having a chat. You're not curious. You're not doing market research. You're selling. Be proud of it!</p>

3: Building Needs

One of the most counter-productive things that you can do is to give your clients what they asked for instead of what they needed. In all areas of sales, people have a tendency to self-diagnose and solve their own problems, leading to mismatched expectations and unhappy clients. Establishing the client's needs is much more than getting a list of requirements from them - it's challenging them to understand the problem they're really trying to solve.

In this session, you will learn how to dig deeper than the client's obvious requirements and uncover their real needs, building a far stronger connection that they can't get with anyone else but you.

Your client will never find out how good your service or product is until they first find out how good a salesperson you are.

On top of that, your clients don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

And on top of that, people don't buy things they want, they buy things they need.

Therefore, in order to know what to sell someone, and for them to find what you're selling highly relevant to them, your product or service has to meet their needs. More than that - it has to meet their needs better than anyone else's product or service.

Marketing experts focus on product features. They try to win the needs competition by having the most features, the best features, the best value. This takes a lot of hard work, is expensive, and is largely unnecessary.

A feature is an aspect of your product or service that you would use to describe it or establish its value for a potential buyer.

A benefit is the reason that a buyer would care about that feature.

If selling involves matching your solution to the buyer's needs, why is it unnecessary for you to have features which are better than those of your competitors?

Write down some of the features of your product or service.

Now write down why those features are better than those of your competitors.

The reason that we don't need to worry about having superior features is that features, in themselves, don't mean anything. If it doesn't matter to the buyer then it doesn't matter.

All that matters to the buyer is their needs. If they can imagine your features meeting their needs, that's good enough. Therefore, the first thing we need to do is figure out what their needs are.

If you simply ask your prospect to tell you their needs, they will often give you a long shopping list, which mostly includes features which they're happy to have if they're available but which ultimately aren't a high priority. To really understand what's going on, we can look at what the words want and need actually mean.

Want is not about desire, want means lack. How do you know that you lack something? Because you can see that someone else has it, or an advert shows you that it exists and you don't have it. Want is a comparison.

Need also means lack, but based on a dependency, something which you rely on. A need is also a comparison, but this time with your own past. Something which you depended on and is no longer available to you.

For you to convert a prospect into a customer, you have to convert their wants into needs and then build those needs to the level where the prospect has to take action.

Write down some of your needs in life.

I'm sure that you know that, in sales, what we're really doing is solving problems. More precisely, your prospects have a problem which is solved by some feature of your product or service. Discover the problem and you can tell the prospect only about the features which solve the problem.

The difficulty for you is that the prospect doesn't want to tell you their problem because they don't want to be sold to, they want to stay in control of their decision without being influenced by you with your magical powers of persuasion.

Luckily, if you have followed the principles in this masterclass so far, you will have established trust. If the prospect thinks that you understand them and their interests, they will tell you what you need to know.

Therefore, asking the client to tell you the problem that they're trying to solve is not only a way to get important information, it's also a test of trust. If the prospect is happy to tell you, move forwards. If they are evasive, or tell you that they just want what they're asking for then you have not done enough to build trust, so go back to the previous stage in the process, for example by revisiting how the conversation began and what your role is in helping the client to get something that they need.

If you ask the prospect a positively framed question such as "What are you hoping to achieve?" or "What are you looking for a product or service to give you" then the prospect will tell you about the solution they have in mind. This is a bad idea, because the prospect's ideal solution will be something unrealistic, or worse, something they have seen from your competitor. Therefore we really do need to direct their attention backwards to the problem that they are trying to solve.

Think of something which you are currently considering buying.

Ask your partner to tell you the problem that they are currently experiencing.

Make a note of what seem to be the most important points, perhaps the points which seem to have the strongest emotional connection.

You now have a list of your prospect's needs.

The next stage is to build the emotional strength of these needs and connect that to your ability to solve the problem.

You might feel tempted to rush into telling the prospect exactly how you can solve their problems. This is not helpful, because they haven't asked you to tell them.

We have to take their various needs to solve their problem and bring them into the present moment, this conversation, and we can do that by making the solution itself another need. If you tell them that you can solve their problem without telling you how, what will their next question be?

By amplifying the problem and connecting your capability to solve it, you create a new problem with a new need in the here and now - the need for information about you and your service.

Play the points back to your partner. Emphasise them. Exaggerate the emotional impact or personal relevance. Your objective is to get your partner to feel more strongly about the problem.

You are looking for your partner to become emotionally involved in your description of their problem.

Finally, create a connection between the list of needs and your product or service. At this stage, you don't have to say exactly how you'll solve the prospect's problems, you only have to make it clear that you can. For example, "I can definitely help you with this" or "I can definitely solve this problem for you" or something which is specific to the problem itself.

What have you achieved with this?

You have connected your product or service to the prospect's need.

Sometimes, when your buyer shops around, they will find that multiple products or services meet their needs, and you might have heard the phrase Unique Selling Point in relation to this. The word 'unique' creates pressure. You will not be unique, and luckily you don't need to be. You only have to be memorable. One of the easiest ways to be memorable is to create a strong emotional connection, by building the intensity of the prospect's needs and connecting that with your capability to deliver.

USPs are usually created by marketing people, who are trying to describe a product or service in such a way as to make the prospect think that this is the only thing like it on the market, which is of course both untrue and irrelevant. Even if it is unique, it won't be for long.

When you were describing a current problem to your partner, you were able to list a number of needs. Did you remember to include time as one of them?

Probably the simplest way to differentiate yourself is through time. The prospect has invested time in sharing their problem with you, and more than that, they have opened themselves up and built trust. Why would they want to spend more time doing that with someone else? Also, time is a need when the prospect needs to act quickly. If you're having the conversation, and you can solve the problem, why would they waste time shopping around?

Remember the most important question that you can ask - "Why now?" - this serves the purpose of uncovering the time pressure, and by amplifying that time pressure, you increase the chances that the prospect will want to save time by moving ahead with you.

Also remember one of the most basic principles of every good sales person – if the prospect is talking to you, they're not talking to someone else (in that moment). Therefore, the more time they invest in you, the less likely they are to give that time to anyone else.

The next stage once you have built their needs is to present your solution, clearly connecting your capability with the prospect's problem and moving them closer towards their final decision.

Homework:

Practice exploring and building needs rather than jumping into solutions.

4: Presenting Your Solution

We've now reached the stage in the sales cycle where you tell the client what you propose to sell them. You might do this verbally, or you might send a written proposal. Remember, though, until the client has a problem, you don't have a solution. Your solution has to be uniquely tailored to the client and their needs, and the risk in what seems like a simple stage of the sales cycle is that your proposed solution fails to convince the client that you can really help them.

In this session, you will discover how to match your solution to the client's problem to give them the confidence that you can really help them to get what they need.

Your client will never find out how good your service or product is until they first find out how good a salesperson you are.

On top of that, your clients don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

And on top of that, people don't buy things they want, they buy things they need.

And on top of that, if your prospect doesn't have a problem, you don't have a solution.

Therefore, in order to know what to sell someone, and for them to find what you're selling highly relevant to them, your product or service has to meet their needs. More than that - it has to meet their needs better than anyone else's product or service. And more than that, it has to meet a specific problem which they are experiencing right now.

In the last session we talked about building the need. Even if your prospect has a current problem, the chances of that pushing them to make a buying decision at the moment they meet you are small. The barrier to taking action is inertia. It's the feeling you have when you're lying on the sofa, thinking that you really should go to the gym. One way that retailers overcome this inertia is to put impulse buys at the till point. You'll buy things because you're already in the middle of a transaction that normally you wouldn't leave home to go and get.

For us, and particularly for service sales, the way we overcome this inertia is by increasing the emotional intensity of the problem, bringing it into the prospect's current awareness and then connecting that problem to your capability, which is what we're focusing on in this session.

Building the prospect's needs and amplifying the discomfort of their problem creates the incentive to hear your solution - up until that point the prospect isn't listening.

A phrase I first heard back in 1985 when I first started work was "telling is not selling".

Do you know the difference between the two?

You certainly know when it's happening to you!

Share your experience of being told to rather than sold to. Work out exactly what it was that switched you off.

Not listening? Not relevant? Pushy? What else?

So now you know what not to do, what can you do instead?

There are really two parts to your solution - a list of features which meet the prospect's specific need, and the cost. You might recognise this as a transaction in itself - here's what you get, and here's what I get in return. You'll often see this reversed, with the price first, "For only \$1000, you get all of these amazing features". This is a marketing pitch, trying to shift the prospect's perception of value because the marketer doesn't know what the prospect values. This is usually counter productive.

'Value proposition' I can solve your problem, here's how, here's the cost, here's the ROI. This is more common in complex sales with many unique components where it's hard for the prospect to evaluate the price.

'Prospect led' What would you need in a solution which would make you feel that it's right for you? This depends on your confidence that your solution does exactly meet the prospect's needs.

'Price led' When we talked about qualification in the first session, one of the common qualification criteria was cost or budget. What is the prospect willing to pay? And what can you reasonably give them for that amount?

'Cost led' What is the problem costing the prospect, and therefore what is it worth to them to solve the problem? However, the emotional aspect of the problem and the prospect's inertia mean that this often isn't a direct trade off. The prospect might pay more or less than the cost of living with the problem.

There isn't one form of solution which works for everyone because it depends on the prospect's perception of risk, the complexity and the uniqueness of what you're selling and the time that the prospect has invested in their relationship with you. Remember that this is your most important differentiator. If you have identified the emotional need, the prospect has shared information with you which they are now less willing to share with anyone else.

The price of your solution has to represent good value, even though the price is completely made up, money itself is just an idea, and your prospect has no idea what anything should cost.

In the last session we talked about presenting your solution so that it meets your prospect's needs and solves their problem. The final hurdle we face is the innate ability that we all have to recognise a fair and equal exchange. Because the concept of value is completely subjective, the prospect's price expectations will have been manipulated by other people - and not even by people in the same business as you.

Think about your primary product or service. Write down how you price that - per item, per session, per hour for example. Now think about and write down the lowest price that a prospect could pay for a comparable product or service. Now think about and write down the highest price that a prospect could pay for a comparable product or service.

Pricing per item, quantity, session, hour, other?

Lowest price in the market for this

Highest price in the market for this

Where you sit within this range has very little to do with the value or quality of your product or service. What it does define is the type of prospect who will consider your solution to be good value.

You will see almost every retailer offering discounts and special offers. These have nothing to do with saving money because you'll always be spending money, only the amount changes. The reason that retailers have sales and discounts is to do with a psychological principle called price anchoring.

Anchoring is an example of a cognitive bias in which we will compare the value of something to the highest and lowest points available.

It takes the Earth 365 days to orbit the Sun. How many Earth days does it take Mars to orbit the Sun?

Retailers and restaurants have their highest sales margins for wine on the midpriced bottles, knowing that customers will avoid the cheapest and most expensive.

How can you make price anchoring work for you?

Look at the range of prices you wrote down earlier. Where are you in that range?

Does your prospect have the same market knowledge as you? What would they perceive as the highest and lowest prices?

In 2/3s, tell your partner what your product or service is. Do not tell them your price. Have them share what they genuinely think are the lowest and highest prices in the market for a comparison. You're not trying to guess what your partner has written, you're providing an objective comparison from outside of their market sector. For example, the cheapest bottle of brandy I've ever seen in a shop is about \$10, the most expensive about \$10,000. I imagine there are more expensive ones, but I can only be sure about what I've actually seen.

Consider what this tells you about price anchoring in your market.

Where are you in the market range of prices?

Lowest ----- Highest

There are some common ways that sellers manipulate the prospect's perception of price.

Discounts and package pricing - Usually \$100, \$75 for today only. \$100 each or \$750 for 10.

Comparison - Gold, Silver and Bronze service packages. Compare to competitors.

Bundles - Price items separately at a higher price than if they are bought together.

Which of these are you using?

If you have a range of products or services at different prices, do you notice a pattern in what prospects most often buy?

A final piece of advice - if you present your pricing with the word 'just' or 'only' then what are you doing, in terms of price anchoring?

You are telling your prospect that your price is too high!

The reason we're not practising solution scripts is that the people here aren't your real prospects and so their responses will not give you genuine feedback. There's no point in role playing, you can only test this out for real. So over the next few weeks, here's what you'll try.

When you have clearly identified your prospect's needs and amplified the emotional aspect of their problem, they are RIPE and ready to hear your proposed solution:

Reassure - I can definitely solve this problem for you

Invite - What do you need to know from me that will help you to decide?

Proposal - Here's what I give you and here's what you give me in return

Embed - How do you feel about this?

Get comfortable with using the format, you're NOT trying to actually sell something. Don't pretend to be a real prospect, though you'll have to say something for the Invite part, just give brief feedback on the fluency, if it made sense, if it felt OK to you. Don't pretend or role play, just get used to the format.

Reassure

Invite

Proposal

Embed

Presenting your solution is part of the overall transaction, and for your prospect to feel comfortable, this needs to represent a fair and equal exchange. What they are getting seems like a fair way to address their needs, and the cost seems fair in relation to their problem. Of course, the solution isn't proven yet, so the key is the prospect being able to imagine your solution working. And the price is completely made up, so the prospect will feel that the price is fair based on their internal comparisons and your confidence when you share your price.

Finally, always remember the most important point - until your prospect has a problem, you don't have a solution.

Your homework for this session is to look at your pricing and reflect on the idea of price anchoring. Have a look through any marketing materials for clues that you don't have confidence in your pricing and consider the impact of offering your prospects a range of pricing options to create your own price anchoring.

And, of course, when you're talking to prospects with an identified need, where you have amplified their problem, you can present your solution when they are RIPE and ready to enter into the transaction with you.

Homework:

Research the lowest and highest prices in your market for a comparable product or service.

Research the lowest and highest prices in your market for a product or service that your customer would use to self medicate. For example, a bottle of wine or box of chocolate is much cheaper and quicker than therapy, though hopefully not as effective in the long term.

5: Closing and Converting

A sales process is a series of decision points, and the closing stage seems the most risky. The possibility that the client will say “no” makes a lot of sales people afraid to ask, with the result that the client loses momentum and goes somewhere else. In reality, closing happens at every stage of the sales cycle, because at every stage, you’re either moving the conversation forwards or you’re walking away. As you get closer to the reality of delivering the service, the risk to the client increases. Will the service give them what they need? Will you do a good job? There’s only one way to find out.

In this session, you will learn how to close the sales process and sign up the client in a way which increases their confidence and comfort.

Your client will never find out how good your service or product is until they first find out how good a salesperson you are.

On top of that, your clients don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.

And on top of that, people don’t buy things they want, they buy things they need.

And on top of that, if your prospect doesn’t have a problem, you don’t have a solution.

Therefore, in order to know what to sell someone, and for them to find what you’re selling highly relevant to them, your product or service has to meet their needs. More than that - it has to meet their needs better than anyone else’s product or service. And more than that, it has to meet a specific problem which they are experiencing right now.

And on top of all that, the price of your solution has to represent good value, even though the price is completely made up, money itself is just an idea, and your prospect has no idea what anything should cost.

In the last session we talked about presenting your solution so that it meets your prospect’s needs and solves their problem. The final hurdle we face is the innate ability that we all have to recognise a fair and equal exchange. Because the concept of value is completely subjective, the prospect’s price expectations will have been manipulated by other people - and not even by people in the same business as you.

In the final stages of the sales process, we now face one final obstacle - trust.

In this session, we’ll focus on the end of the sales process where we close our journey with the prospect and, all being well, convert them from a prospect into a customer or client.

In the old days, if you wanted to buy something, you had to leave home, travel to a shop and get it. The internet gave us online ordering and delivery, and the competitive free market pushed that to next day delivery, then same day delivery, then instant delivery - of digital products. Companies like Amazon are even taking this a stage further, trying to guess what you might buy next. At the moment, that means that they make recommendations when you are in the buying transaction, however they have looked at the option of pre-shipping things that you might buy to a local distribution point, and I’m sure you’ll have heard of their experiments with robot and drone delivery.

This doesn’t only change your expectations of Amazon, it changes your expectations for all retailers. They would argue that it pushes the retail industry to provide better service, but it also pushes out retailers who can’t afford to compete. And not only retailers, the internet has driven consumers to self service, to write their own wills, solve their own legal problems, do their own tax returns, bake their own wedding cakes, make their own jewellery and more. And over the last year, with many businesses closed down or inaccessible, consumers have been forced to turn to online video sharing and learning websites. On top of the original problem of trust, we have the additional problem that our prospects have had a year’s experience of solving their own problems.

In the last session you thought about price anchoring and you looked at the range of prices in the market for a product or service like yours. By building your prospect's needs and forming a personal connection, you altered their perception of value because after sharing their story with you, they are now more reluctant to spend time sharing it with anyone else. Your client has no idea if your solution will solve their problem, so when you are ready to close the sale, you hit another obstacle, the final commitment point where the prospect has to work out if they can really trust you to deliver.

In product sales, we start off with a fair and equal position. You have the product, the customer has the money. After the buying process, we're still in a fair and equal position. You have the money and the customer has the product. If the product does not meet the customer's expectation, you can both swap and end up where you began, in a fair and equal position.

This is not the case in service sales.

Why is service sales different? If the customer is not happy and you give them their money back, why are you not both back in the same fair and equal position that you started in?

I see many different ways that people use to get past this obstacle. What examples can you think of?

Money back guarantee

Extra incentives

Price reductions

Time limited offers

We have two problems.

1, Buyers will know that these incentives are on offer, so they will create an obstacle to see what else they can get.

2, None of these are actually a substitute for trust.

You will save yourself a lot of lost profit by focusing on what the prospect actually needs - trust.

It helps if we can actually define what trust is. Can you?

What is trust?

Let's define trust as confidence in a prediction of the future. You trust someone because you think that you can predict their actions and that their actions will be good for you.

Therefore, in sales, trust is a substitute for control.

Your prospect can't solve their problem by themselves, that's why they're talking to you. They have already tried to solve their own problem in the past, which is why they are now ready to pay for you to do it properly. They are at a point of high risk. They are strongly aware of their problem, and they are also about to give control to you to solve it for them.

They need to look you in the eye, one last time, and figure out if they trust you to do what they would do if only they had your knowledge, training, certification, resources...

In other words, they want you to act as if you are them. They want you to value what's important to them and do the job to the standard that they would do it, or preferably better.

So how do we give the prospect the feeling of control without actually giving them control?

We need to show the prospect that we understand what's important to them AND we need to give the prospect sight of the delivery process so that they know exactly what to expect.

We're going to practice two parts to this. First, to put yourself in the prospect's shoes and reassure them that you understand their needs and you're going to take care of them.

Your partner will assume that they have a need for your product or service.

You will then ask them what's most important for them in making a decision to spend their hard earned money with you.

You will then think about other customers who have had the same needs and say:

I understand how you FEEL

I had other customers who FELT the same way

And they FOUND that... and then share how your product or service is going to give your prospect what's most important to them.

This is called the FEEL - FELT - FOUND technique!

The next part to practice is giving the prospect sight of the delivery process - what happens next.

Simply, tell your prospect what would happen next if they wanted to go ahead or place an order.

What points would you include in this?

Timescales → Documents → Contracts → Deliverables → Options → Payment → ?

This serves a dual purpose. First, it gives the prospect a sense of safety and reassurance through knowing what to expect. Second, it causes the prospect's brain to fill in the gaps in the flow of time and create a story within which they have already bought your product or service.

Pretend that you are at the end of the sales conversation. You have heard about your prospect's problem, you have presented the solution and the prospect only now has to do one thing, say yes or no. So the logical next step is that they need to know what happens next, what they need to do, what to expect from you and so on. Share with your prospects the next steps and conclude with...

How do you feel about this?

What would you like to do next?

Did you notice your brain filling in the gaps to give you a feeling of reassurance?

You have now converted your prospect into either a customer or client, or they have decided not to buy from you at this time. Either is good, because you are no longer investing time in the sales process. You can now either get onto delivering what the customer has bought, or you can invest your time in another prospect.

Most importantly, you have given this prospect an experience of you as a sales person. You have treated them with care, you have acted professionally, you have understood their problem, you have built a relationship, you have established credibility. If they bought from you - great! If not, they still had a good experience of the process, and so next time we'll be working on a very important part of sales which brings us full circle back to the beginning, and we'll be talking about a counter intuitive idea - that the best time to get a referral or testimonial is before your customer has received what they have bought from you.

Homework:

Work out and write down your delivery process. Are you happy with it? Is there anything that you would change?

Is there anything missing? If clients always ask the same questions then that might be a clue.

Is there anything that you're imposing on your clients which they don't need?

6: Referral Selling

At the final stage of the sales process, your role switches, from sales person to service provider. Up until this point, your client has joined you on this journey because of your sales skills, and now they are about to find out if your technical skills live up to the promise. Assuming you do as good a job as you have promised, the next step is to build this good experience back into your prospecting activities with reviews, testimonials and referrals. Perhaps most importantly, this is a good time to ask your client why they chose to buy from you, helping you to refine your sales process and become even more efficient and effective.

In this session, you will discover how to continually refine your sales process and focus your time where you have the greatest impact. You'll also learn some surprising ideas for how to get, and use testimonials and referrals.

What have you learned in this masterclass?

How has this learning been of value for you?

What have you been able to do as a result of this workshop?

What would you say to anyone who is considering joining next time?

When is the right time to ask your clients for a testimonial?

It was a trick question. The correct answer is "It depends".

It depends on WHY you are asking for the testimonial and what you're planning to do with it.

Let's look at the basics. What is a testimonial? It is the client's testimony, their true story. Usually, a client will talk about their positive experience, and of course that means they're talking about what's important for them, not what's important to your next client. Do they *want* to be associated with your product or service? Does it make them look good?

Let's consider all the points in the sales cycle where the reassurance of a testimonial will be helpful, and then figure out how to use a testimonial, and then figure out how to get a testimonial.

In 2/3s list the stages of the sales cycle and work out what the risk for the prospect is, and then what they need to hear from a testimonial which will give them confidence and build trust.

As you move through the sales cycle, the prospect's risk shifts from choice and time to commitment and money, so the testimonial offers social proof to build confidence. Show the right testimonial at the right time to address the right risk!

Prospecting, lead generation and qualifying

Starting the conversation

Building needs

Presenting your solution

Closing and converting

What about generic testimonials, are they worthwhile? Of course your product/service is great! Why would you share a testimonial otherwise?

What message are you sending with a generic testimonial?

Focus on the risk.

Another important thing to get from your clients is a referral. Referrals are valuable because they reduce your cost of sale. The question is, why would your clients tell their friends about you?

Your clients have a social network, and in any network, your value is based on your connectedness. The more connections you have, the more valuable you are. Think about other networks. The more train lines come into a station, the more destinations you can travel to, the more valuable it is.

Your clients value connections, and once they have found a good service provider or a trusted salesperson, they have gained knowledge which makes them more valuable. A referral is a way for them to add value in their own network. A referral enables them to help someone to solve a problem, so they need to clearly understand how your product or service can help their friends.

We also need to consider whether they want their friends and colleagues to know that they bought your product or service. With some services, people might be reluctant to admit that they couldn't solve the problem for themselves. You might find that your clients are more likely to generate referrals before they have used your service!

Which stage of the sales cycle does referral selling fit into?

Should you ask for referrals, or just wait and hope?

When should you ask for referrals?

How should you ask for referrals?

Should you give an incentive for referrals?

Should you contact the referral or wait for them to contact you?

Share what you are selling. What would you need to see or hear that would make you feel confident to tell your friends about your colleagues? Don't say nice things for the sake of it, you'll learn more from honest feedback.

Notice how the reassurance you needed was to maintain trust within your network. You are only prepared to make a referral if you feel it adds value to you in your network or, at worst, has a neutral impact on your status within your network. You want to be seen as someone who adds value to your friends and colleagues, someone who knows how to solve their problems, and the experts you have access to are an important resource for you. Remember this when you are asking for and selling to referrals.

I'd like to get some testimonials from you. What do you think I should ask for? And how and when do you think I should use them in future?

Homework:

Send me a testimonial with a clear reason why someone should choose to learn with me in the future.

Write yourself a testimonial. What has it been like, being you, so far, and what is there to look forward to in the future? What is the best thing about being you? What would you say to someone who is thinking of being you? How could someone be more like you? How would that be good for them?

Put your testimonial somewhere you can see it every day.

So, that was Selling Made Easy. If you have invested time developing your technical skills then it's just as important to invest in your sales skills. Remember, your client will never find out how good your service or product is until they first find out how good a salesperson you are.

In order to have time with your clients which they pay money for, you have to invest time which you're not getting paid for. Many service providers try to outsource this; to PAs, marketing agencies and so on. This is not effective when part of the buying decision is based on you. An agent might be able to understand your features and pricing but they can't build a relationship on your behalf.

Selling really can be easy when you practice and commit to enjoying it as an important, natural part of the process of building and developing customer relationships. Fundamentally, the sales process is the point in the relationship at which you build value, and that value is the reason why your customers will love you, keep coming back and tell all their friends about you.

That's right. Your customers won't love you because you delivered a great service. That's just normal. That's what you're supposed to do. That's only what they expected. That's what they paid you for. You got money, they got their whatever it was. A fair and equal exchange. What more do you want?

Your customers will love you because you cared for them, understood them, empathised with their needs, listened, presented relevant and meaningful solutions, supported them through the process, communicated effectively, kept them informed, followed up, did what you promised to do, when you promised to do it and you gave them space to make valuable and well informed choices. In short, your customers will love you because you were an attentive, organised, effective salesperson.

Isn't that an interesting idea to end on?