

Lesson 31

SALES AND SELLING TECHNIQUES

Sales

Sales, or the activity of selling, form an integral part of commercial activity. Mastering Sales is considered by many as some sort of PERSUADING —art".

Sales Defined

“Sales refer to as a systematic process of repetitive and measurable milestones, by which a salesperson relates his offering enabling the buyer to visualize how to achieve his goal in an economic way”.

'Selling' has long suffered from a tarnished image. It is, indeed, true that dubious selling practices may occasionally result in a sale if the customer is particularly gullible. But it is arguable that, even then, only good marketing (which encompasses a far wider range of skills, with an almost diametrically opposed motivation) 'will lead the customer to buy again from the same company '.

Organizations seldom profit from single purchases made by first-time customers. Normally they rely on repeat business to generate the profit that they need.

Selling is a practical implementation of MARKETING it often forms a separate grouping in a corporate structure, employing separate specialist operatives known as salesmen (singular: salesman or salesperson).

The primary function of professional sales is to generate and close leads, educate prospects, fill needs and satisfy wants of consumers appropriately, and therefore turn prospective customers into actual ones.

From a marketing point of view, selling is one of the methods of promotion used by marketers.

Other promotional techniques include advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and public relations.

Several types of sales exist including direct, consultative, and complex sales. Complex sales varies from other types in that the customer plays a more pro-active role, often requiring proposal response to their Request for Proposal (RFP).

Mode of Selling

Modes of selling include:

- Direct Sales - involving face-to-face contact retail or consumer
- Door-to-door or traveling salesman
- Party plan

- Industrial/Professional Sales - selling from one business to another business-to-business

- Indirect - human-mediated but with indirect contact telemarketing or telesales

Electronic

- web B2B, B2C
- EDI

- Agency-based
 1. consignment
 2. multi-level marketing
 3. sales agents (real estate, manufacturing)

Types of Sales include:

- Transaction sales
- Consultative sales
- Complex sales

Critique of Selling

In theory, the purpose of selling is to help a customer realize his or her goals in an economic fashion.

However, in reality this is not always the case. Customers can be influenced to purchase a product or service that initially was not of interest to them. Some salespeople are trained in the art of selling customers things they don't need.

Take for example the purchasing of a car: a consumer may have a set of cars in mind (called an evoked set) that she feels match her needs, wants and budget. She may seek the advice of a salesperson given that a salesperson can help her realize the right car given those criteria. This can be a socially useful function; salespeople have specialized knowledge of products that can help consumers make an informed decision.

However, a salesperson may also talk a consumer into purchasing a more expensive or perhaps larger car than she needs or can afford. In this context, the salesperson may have usefully helped the customer re-evaluate her needs, thereby establishing a new set of appropriate choices among which included the newer or large car. This again would be a helpful and useful service provided by the salesperson. However, it is sometimes the case that customers purchase a product or service that was not initially intended and remains an inappropriate purchase after

the fact. On the other hand, the consumer in this scenario can be held partially responsible for the inappropriate purchase; indeed, "A fool and his money are soon parted." (English proverb)

This dysfunctional behaviour is encouraged by:

- Incentives of salespeople to increase their total number of sales, especially where retailers keep track of sales or offer commission-based salaries.
- Incentives from the manufactures of products or the companies of service providers to salespeople to sell their products where other similar products offered by competitors are offered.
- The incentive to sell a customer a product that is in need of being cleared out, despite the fact that a customer may be better to wait for the new product.

Selling Technique

Selling Technique is the body of methods used in the profession of sales, also often called personal selling.

Techniques in use vary from the highly customer centric consultative selling to the heavily pressured "hard close". All techniques borrow a bit from experience and mix in a bit of guesswork on the psychology of what motivates others to buy something offered to them. Mastery in the techniques of selling can offer very high incomes, while failure in it is nearly proverbial. Coverage of the latter is popularized in the Arthur Miller play Death of a Salesman. Because selling faces a high level of rejection, it is often difficult for the practitioner to handle emotionally, and is usually cited as the most common reason for leaving the profession. Because of this many selling and sales training techniques involve a lot of motivational material.

- Prospecting
 1. Referrals
 2. Qualifying
- Presentation
 1. Questions
 2. Selling the sizzle
 3. Closing
 4. Pre-closing questions
 5. Tie downs
- Handling objections
- Confidence
- Empathy
 1. Reading people

Good selling involves asking questions to elicit the prospect's needs and desires and finding the appropriate product or service that meets those needs and that the prospect is willing to pay for. If good prospecting (qualifying) is done, then the prospect may already be well suited to the product or service and the salesperson simply needs to lead the prospect to act on the desires and needs he has. A good salesperson is much more knowledgeable about their product or service than the prospect could ever likely be and can offer valuable information and insight to the decision making process.

In addition, an ethical salesperson will always make sure the prospect receives more value from the product or service they have purchased than they have paid.