



**Enhance Your Future**  
Professional Training Consultants

**AURSCA005**

**Sell automotive products and services**

**LEARNER RESOURCE**



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# TOPIC 1 – ENGAGE CUSTOMER AND IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SALE

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## WELCOMING CUSTOMER ENVIRONMENT IS MAINTAINED, AND CUSTOMER IS APPROACHED IN A TIMELY AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER ACCORDING TO WORKPLACE PROCEDURES

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Good customer service is essential to any business whether retail, hospitality or any service industry. Good customer service can be defined by the 5 "Ps":

- Promptness
- Politeness
- Professionalism
- Performance
- Personalisation

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### PROMPTNESS

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When promising delivery of products, it is imperative that they be on time. People generally do not like to wait, particularly when they have been given an expected time of delivery of a product. An example of this is the automotive industry - customers don't like to be kept waiting for their new car. Likewise, people like to be acknowledged when they walk into a showroom even if they just want to browse. Greeting the customer in a timely manner is an important aspect of customer service, so within the first 30 seconds in a showroom or business, an employee should greet customers and begin to meet their needs.

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### POLITENESS

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Being polite when dealing with a customer is an important part of establishing a successful rapport. Saying "Hello," "Good afternoon," "Sir" and "Thank you very much" is part of good customer service. Trying to make a sale before warmly greeting the customer is impolite. A "thank you" is appropriate whether or not a purchase is made on that visit.

No matter how well you approach, sometimes a customer will not want any attention or service from you at this time. The most important thing is not to see this as rejection. This does not mean they don't want to communicate at all it just means the customer initially wants some time alone.

There are reasons why customers resist attention. These can include:

- A fear of being pressured
- They are not sure of what they want
- They are shy
- They do not want to be rushed
- They just don't need any help

When a customer answers your approach with "I'm just looking", or "I'm happy browsing":

- Maintain open body language and smile
- Encourage the customer to stay and browse
- Make appropriate comments such as:
  - "Just let me know if there is a particular car or product you are interested in."
  - "That's fine, just wanted to let you know that we have free accessories today only with the cars."

You should always check with your Supervisor or Manager about the timing and nature of the acknowledgement and approach that your business prefers or uses and check to identify if there are any standard phrases.

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## MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

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It is integral to your success that you are able to maintain professional ethics. These ethics include:

- Honesty
- Knowledge of products and services
- Positivity

## APPROPRIATE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ARE USED TO ENGAGE THE CUSTOMER & CUSTOMER NEEDS, AND EXPECTATIONS FOR SPECIFIC PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE IDENTIFIED THROUGH QUESTIONING AND ACTIVE LISTENING

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Interpersonal skills are life skills that we implement in our everyday lives. Generally speaking, people who have developed strong interpersonal skills are more successful in both their personal and professional lives. Employers often seek to hire individuals with strong interpersonal skills to ensure that their staff can effectively communicate with both colleagues and customers.

Interpersonal skills can include:

- Verbal communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Listening skills
- Negotiation skills
- Problem solving skills
- Decision making skills
- Assertiveness

When clarifying the needs of the customer accurately, you need to:

- Ask the appropriate questions
- Listen actively
- Show empathy and reassurance
- Confirm the customers want or needs

These are all examples of implementing different types of interpersonal skills.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CUSTOMER

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Your workplace may have a format whereby all customers are acknowledged in the same way, or it may allow you to tailor your approach to the customer depending on the situation. Many businesses will have a timeline for making contact with or acknowledging a customer. Just as the acknowledgement of your customers should be timely, it should also be personable and friendly.

- Reading between the lines of what is actually being said. Paying attention not only to the words but also to the accompanying body language.
- Use questioning, to sum up, or clarify the situation so that both you and the customer are on the same track
- Being non-judgmental, not making comments which may be stereotypical or presumptuous.
- Continuing to be sensitive, demonstrating that you understand not just what they are saying, but that you also appreciate the emotions that underpin their words

### METHODS TO AID EFFECTIVE LISTENING

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Effective listening requires practice. You need to practice what may seem a basic and pretty obvious skill.

Practice should be focused and based on the following points:

- Prepare yourself to listen, get rid of things that may interrupt, or block communication, get into a service-oriented frame of mind
- Become interested, focus on what is being said and get caught up in it ask questions, look interested, ask yourself how you can use what you are being told to provide service and to make a sale
- Keep an open mind, don't prejudge the situation, don't interrupt and don't tune out
- Identify the main idea, realise that this may come at the start of the message, the middle or the end there is no set rule
- Listen critically weigh up what is being said without simply accepting it, critical listening provides clues about when and where we need to use our product knowledge to correct a customer's misconception about a product
- Don't get distracted, focus your attention on the speaker and what they are saying, losing interest in the customer is rude and destroys all effort at establishing a relationship

- **Economy** - The value for money relates to a value, not price. Generally, however, the price range of products can also be a powerful attracting or inhibiting feature
- **Performance**- What does a product do?
- **What need does it fulfil?** - These types of questions can identify the customer's exact need for an item. The previous level of performance may influence the customer to buy an item over another
- **Durability** - This will usually relate to how long things will last. There may be a value for money aspect involved here also
- **Comfort** - Comfort may include convenience, physical comfort or warranty
- **Appearance** -The appearance of an item can have varying degrees of influence when customers purchase items
- **Safety** -Safety can mean security from physical harm or danger

Understanding that each customer's needs are vitally important to them will help you assist them with the successful outcome of their purchase.

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## PRESENTING A VEHICLE

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When presenting a vehicle to your customer, they may ask what the advantages are of buying a new or used vehicle may be. Buying a new vehicle includes; firstly that it hasn't been used! It can be made to order with your own choice of all the latest options and gizmos. The warranty is untouched, and it has all the latest safety features. It will usually have better fuel efficiency and lower emissions and could include free scheduled maintenance or reduced price servicing. Free roadside assistance is often included, and banks provide cheaper interest on the purchase of a new car.

The advantages of buying a used vehicle include a lower price, depreciation from new already occurring, and potentially cheaper insurance rates. You may have preferred the options on a previous model that are no longer available. There are a lot of used vehicles available in every make and model, and you can have a wider selection to choose from.

You should always start at the front of the vehicle so that the customer moves toward sitting in the driver's seat. You want to get the customer to take it for a demo drive. The average presentation should be around 10 minutes. Your product knowledge is critical

## CUSTOMERS ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, IF APPROPRIATE, TO TEST OR TRIAL THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE

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Your customer will want to take a vehicle for a test drive to ensure the vehicle meets their needs. If a customer is buying a product, they may also want to take it out of its wrapping or box to test the features and ensure that it operates as required. They may want to check the fit, the size, the weight or the usability of the product.

As you have walked around the car with your customer and described the features remember to explain any benefits that are related to it and to offer the customer a test drive. Some dealerships for safety reasons prefer that you drive the vehicle out of the dealership and accompany the driver on the test drive. Customers will want to drive the vehicle themselves or to take the car out for a drive on their own. Refer to policies and procedures about this.

Test drive rules are different with each dealership. Some allow for the overnight use of the vehicle; some restrict the drive to 10kms or less. Others allow the driver to take the vehicle without the salesperson and others insist that the salesperson accompanies the driver. You will need to review your policies and procedures relating to test-drives. Regardless of this you will need to get the dealer plate and put it on the car before you leave the lot

It is important to offer the vehicle that matches the customer's preferences for the test operation as various models have certain options and powertrains that will alter the feel of the vehicle. Encourage your customer to review the following:

- Interior features and storage
- The driver's and front passenger's ease of ingress and egress
- The rear seats comfort and adjustability
- The vehicle's safety features, such as the number of airbags, safety electronics, and adjustable seatbelts
- The vehicle's fit, finish, and general build quality
- Towing features and capacities

As you go on the test drive the customer will want to drive the vehicle through a number of environments, including:

- A highway where there is an opportunity to drive at the maximum legal speed
- A dirt road to test the hold on a loose surface

- Small narrow lanes to check on manoeuvrability
- Parallel and angle parking
- Reversing in a number of locations
- Driving up and down a steep hill
- Attempting a three- point turn in a confined space
- Testing the navigation system

As the customer is driving they will be assessing the vehicle for the following:

- Reach of the primary controls
- Height of the dashboard
- Seat height and comfort
- Seat belt height and comfort
- Visibility of gauges, readouts and display screens
- Climate control, including heating and cooling
- Mobile phone, Bluetooth wireless, Wi-Fi connectivity and voice operation
- Space for glasses and essentials within easy reach
- Operation of navigation system
- Adequate power to safely merge with traffic
- Ease of parking
- Visibility and any blind spots
- Road noise and cabin noise

When the customer returns reflect on their test drive and answer their questions, which may be about:

- Fuel efficiency
- Oil change intervals
- Warranty terms
- Cost or replacement parts and servicing
- Upgraded specifications available
- Accessories and options
- Anything else that relates to the comfort and handling of the vehicle

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# TOPIC 3 – OBTAIN CUSTOMER AGREEMENT TO PURCHASE PRODUCT OR SERVICE

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## PRICE FOR PRODUCT OR SERVICE IS DISCUSSED OR NEGOTIATED AND AGREED

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Arriving at an acceptable price for a vehicle with a customer can take some negotiating. The customer will want to lock in the lowest price that they will have to pay for the vehicle. They will also have very different expectations and knowledge about buying a vehicle. Some will negotiate, some you will persuade with the offer of free mats or licence plate holders.

There may not be any opportunity to negotiate the price of a product sold in an automotive retailer or spare parts section of a dealership. Prices are determined and listed and must be sold at that price. There may be volume discounts available or staff discounts or trade discounts, but as a general rule, there is little opportunity to negotiate a lower price.

When you are negotiating and agreeing on a price for a vehicle with a customer you need to be aware of:

- The price the dealership paid for the vehicle so that you can achieve a profit on this.
- Margins that can be made by promoting finance extended warranties and dealer add-ons like rustproofing.
- Trade-in values and the potential on-sell profit to be made

Informed customers will know the value of all possible options and offers you throw their way, and they will also have determined the price they are prepared to pay. Some circumstances may allow for negotiation, including:

- A trade-in vehicle and the potential on-sell of that vehicle
- Options that can be added or removed from the offer
- Genuine price offers and sales
- Finance, leasing and insurance arrangements

In order to determine the appropriate time to approach a customer, read through, and become familiar with, the following examples of buying behaviour.

- **Lingering around merchandise** - If you notice a customer lingering around merchandise, it is a good sign that they are interested in purchasing. They may be having trouble making up their mind and needing some assistance. It may also be an opportunity for you to show them some similar merchandise to help them decide
- **Facial expressions** - Do you notice obvious facial expressions when a customer is looking at merchandise? There could be a look of elation at finding just the right thing. Similarly, they could screw their nose up if what they are looking at does not appeal
- **Searching** - Does the customer appear to be looking around, searching for assistance? Could they be holding an item of clothing and looking for the change rooms? Maybe they want to clarify the price of an item?
- **Touching** - If a customer is touching the merchandise, feeling the texture, reading labels, examining packaging it's a good sign they are interested in purchasing

Remember to acknowledge customers as you walk past them. Simply saying 'Hello' can show a friendly atmosphere and put them at ease. Use these signals of buying behaviour to offer further assistance when able.

Remember all customers are different and because all people are different, you will encounter several different types of customers in just one day! Since customers are different, what is good timing for one, may not be good timing for another. Keep in mind that the 'browser' will require more time looking around than a customer who knows what they want.

By understanding that all customers are different and making your approaches realistic and flexible, you will show your customers that you are ready to assist them with their purchases or enquiries.

A major failure to comply with a consumer guarantee is when:<sup>10</sup>

- *A reasonable consumer would not have bought the vehicle if they knew about the problem or a series of problems. For example, a reasonable consumer would not buy a new car with a fault that several mechanics could not fix. A reasonable consumer would not buy a new car if it had so many faults that the car has spent more time off the road than on it*
- *The vehicle is significantly different from the description, sample or demonstration model shown to the consumer. For example, a consumer orders a vehicle with a diesel engine after test-driving the diesel demonstration model, but the vehicle delivered has a petrol engine*
- *The vehicle is substantially unfit for its normal purpose and can't be made fit within a reasonable time*
- *The vehicle is substantially unfit for a purpose the consumer told the dealer they needed it for*
- *The vehicle is dangerous to use because of the problems it experiences*

*Anything not considered a major failure is a minor failure. A minor failure to comply with a consumer guarantee is when:*

- *The problem does not interfere with the normal operation of the vehicle*
- *The problem can be fixed quickly, for example by replacing or repairing a faulty part.*

When packaging and delivering fragile car components and products you must ensure that they are safely and securely packaged and if they are very heavy that you apply a warning sticker to inform whoever may be manual handling the product.

If products or spare parts are being delivered in pallets to the business or to the customer, ensure safe manual handling procedures are followed in line with industry and enterprise policies and procedures. And if any parts are coming from overseas ensure the product labelling complies with Australian legislation and standards.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/law/your-rights/consumer-rights-complaints-and-scams/buying-products-and-services/buying-products/buying-a-new-car/>

There are 4 strategies you can use to assist with the value-added sales process:

- **Focusing** is the first group of strategies. Focusing is identifying viable sales opportunities, penetrating the account thoroughly, and developing a customer-value focus. The salesperson's analytical and diagnostic skills play an important role here.
- **Persuasion** is the second group of strategies. The salesperson is still in the offensive selling mode. This is projecting one's uniqueness, differentiating one's solution, and presenting a compelling argument to buy. The salesperson's promotional skills and persuasiveness contribute to their success at this point in the process.
- The buyer has placed the order and is waiting to receive goods. The salesperson begins her defensive selling activities. **Supporting** is the third group of strategies. This is process and people support. The salesperson's logistics skills and people skills play an important role at this stage of the Value-Added Selling process.
- **After-marketing** is the fourth group of strategies. This is the sale-after-the-sale. It's defensive selling at its best. This is the process of getting credit for all of your value added, looking for ways to re-create value for the customer, and increasing your business with existing customers. The salesperson's follow-up and creativity are instrumental at this point.<sup>13</sup>

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## FINDING POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

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There are many ways to find potential customers. Identifying potential customers can be as simple as telling people what you do and where you do it. Consider the following methods for prospecting potential markets:

- Tell your family and friends to ask for you; tell them you sell cars and give them a card
- Get in touch with service customers and check to see if they had a good experience

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<sup>13</sup> <http://tomreillytraining.com/writings-and-recordings/articles/the-value-added-sales-process/>

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## SUMMARY

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Now that you have completed this unit, you should have the skills and knowledge to sell products and services in an automotive retail environment.

If you have any questions about this resource, please ask your trainer. They will be only too happy to assist you when required.

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