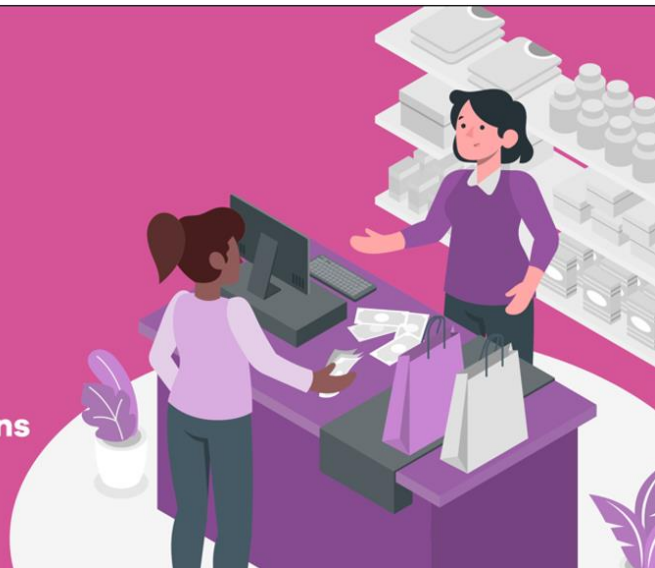


SELLING FOR CREATIVES

delighting your customers

Factsheet 4

- Understand the Psychology of Sales
- Interpersonal skills for sales and negotiations
- Excelling at Customer Service



Welcome to the Selling for Creatives factsheet, summarising the key points from the Workshop session delivered as part of the Flourishing Barnstaple Programme. This guide will provide you with an overview of some of the tricks used in selling to gain the trust of your customers and close the deal!

Understanding the Psychology of Sales? One of the mistakes made by some business owners is that they focus all of their energy on creating and developing their 'amazing products', that they forget to consider whether their customers actually want, or need, them! Sometimes it becomes necessary to 'help' the customer along this journey and this is where it helps to understand the psychology of making a sale.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: American psychologist Abraham Maslow devised his Hierarchy of Needs, which is usually represented as a pyramid.

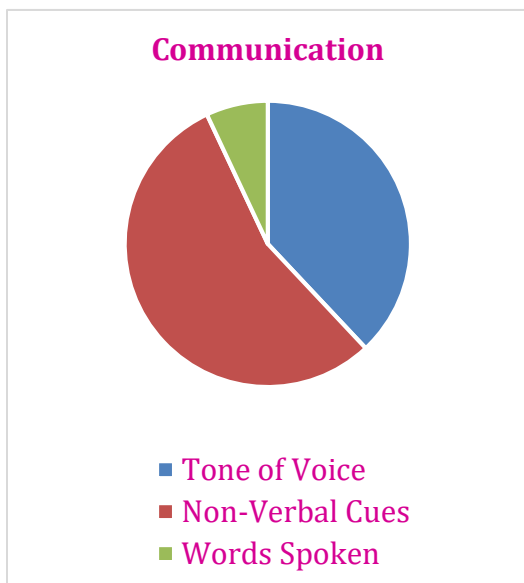
Starting at the bottom, you have the basic survival needs such as food, water, shelter, warmth, etc. Once those needs are met, the emphasis turns towards comfort and security, such as finding employment and acquiring property & belongings. The next step is about building social connections such as family and friendships. When those various needs have been met, the next step is about developing self-esteem and gaining respect and recognition from others. The final stage is about self-fulfilment and realising one's full potential.



The first step towards making a sale, is understanding what your customer is looking for, how important it is to them, and how your product or service will meet that need. Once you understand that, you can tell them all about your product or service and draw their attention to the features and benefits that are relevant to them.

Understanding the difference between Features and Benefits: It is important to distinguish between the features and benefits of a product or service when talking to your customers about a particular product or service.

The Features of a product are the inherent properties that you believe make it stand out. They are usually tangible or measurable and can often be used to compare it with competitor products. The Benefits are all about how the features of the product will make life easier or better for the customer and are often more intangible in nature.



The use of Body language: People subconsciously notice and interpret non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, and posture, to gauge someone's sincerity, empathy, and professionalism.

Positive body language can convey confidence, trustworthiness, and genuine interest making it easier to establish a connection and build rapport with the customer. Negative body language, such as avoiding eye contact, crossing arms, or displaying disinterest, on the other hand, can lead to misinterpretation, distrust, and dissatisfaction.



Prof. Albert Mehrabian, of the University of California (UCLA), suggested that non-verbal cues, including body language, account for up to 55% of communication effectiveness, followed by 38% attributed to tone of voice and only 7% to the actual words spoken. This is summarised as “The 7-38-55 Rule”

Handling objections: If you feel you are close to achieving a sale, but your customer still appears to be undecided, they may start to come up with objections, or reasons not to proceed. In some cases, there may be legitimate reasons for not making an immediate decision and sometimes there may be more to it than appears to be the case. If you can get to the crux of the matter, you may be able to address their ‘hidden concerns’ and close the sale. The key steps for this are:

Listen - It is important to listen to what they are saying so that you can distinguish whether there is a genuine reason for their hesitation, or if there is still an opportunity to turn the situation around.

Reflect/Understand – Make sure that you have correctly understood their reason(s). Try paraphrasing their objections: “so, just to clarify, the only thing stopping you is....?” This may simply allow them to reiterate their concern, or it may throw up other ‘hidden’ issues.

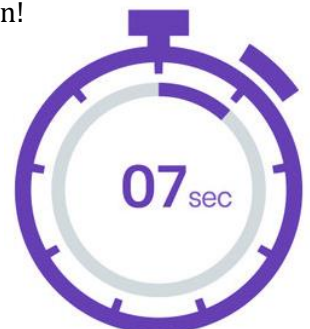
Acknowledge/Respond – Respect their ‘objection, and don’t try to dismiss it. Show that you take it seriously and, if it is possible, offer a solution.

Confirm – Reiterate the objection and seek confirmation that, if you can offer a solution, would they be happy to go ahead?

How to excel at Customer Service: You only get one chance to make a First Impression!

Opinions vary about how long it takes people to form an opinion of somebody when they first meet. These range from one-tenth of a second to a whole 7 seconds! Either way, that means you have next to no time at all in which to grab their attention.

If you are sending out the wrong vibes, then you have probably blown it before you even open your mouth!



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Starting with your premises: First Impressions count so if you have customers visiting you in person, think about what impression they will get as they walk through the door, or approach your market stall.

Is your window (or market stall) display enticing? Does it get refreshed from time-to-time? Does it tell people what you do? Once they've made the decision to come in, will people feel welcome and comfortable? Is the space warm and inviting?

Are the premises clean and tidy? For a working studio, a little creative muddle can add to the charm of the premises, and customers may feel as though they are participating in the creative process, but make sure that the retail space remains tidy and accessible.

Is there room for people to browse and look at what is on offer? Is the signage clear and professional? Will they be able to find what they are looking for? Is the pricing clear? Are there unopened boxes and pieces of equipment obstructing walkways?

Consider Front-of-House staff: What sort of reception do your customers get once they've come through the door? If possible, try to make sure all staff are clean and presentable (although, if this is also your creative space, then some evidence of 'work-in-progress' may add to the authenticity!)



Greet everyone with a smile and a welcome – maybe try a little small talk to see if you can get an idea of their personality and try to put them at ease. Take the opportunity to demonstrate your skill and knowledge – tell people a little bit about your products: where the materials come from, if there is a story behind the designs and how they are made.

Offer help (if required) but don't be overbearing – give them breathing space and don't follow them around the building (unless you suspect them of shoplifting!). If possible, try to avoid eating, smoking, chatting on the phone, scrolling through social media, etc. – especially whilst talking to them or dealing with a purchase etc.

Think about how the Stock is displayed: Is the stock attractively laid out? So that it is easy to see what you have on offer? Is stock displayed in a logical order with related or similar stock items displayed near to each other? Make sure stock is displayed within the reach and eye line of its target market – items on the floor or on the top shelves may be easily missed. If you have space, consider 'staging' some products to help the customer visualise them at home and, if you have any eye-catching 'impulse buy' type items, consider placing them near the till so that people can look at them whilst waiting to be served.

Delighting your customers! In December 2024, Information media company Outsource Accelerator published a list of the "Top 10 UK Service Companies":

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| 1. John Lewis & Partners | 5. Marks & Spencer | 8. Virgin Media |
| 2. First Direct | 6. Sky | 9. Sainsbury's |
| 3. Amazon UK | 7. British Airways | 10. Lloyds Bank |
| 4. Tesco | | |

Customer feedback received during their research, included comments such as: "Outstanding Customer Service", "Issues resolved smoothly", "Staff go the extra mile", "Consistently good", "Quick to respond", "Helpful delivery service" etc.



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Ways to improve Customer Service: Where possible, try to offer more than expected – the little touches, such as 'Free' gifts, 'supplying a product 'care leaflet', helping to carry items to their car can all help to make the customer feel they are getting special treatment.

At the counter, ask whether you can help with anything else? Maybe suggest complementary items or offer to add the customer onto your 'Exclusive' mailing list. For significant purchases, consider following up a few days later by email or telephone to enquire whether everything was okay with the item? If it was delivered on time? Did the purchased item fit in as expected? etc.

Remember to seek Reviews: "As a 'valued customer' you would welcome their feedback, take the opportunity to ask what went well? (& what didn't?)

Make sure you respond to complaints and, if possible, try to turn them into a positive. Even negative reviews can be useful, particularly if you can show that you cared enough to respond directly, and how you sought to put it right. Thank them for bringing the matter to your attention and, if appropriate, try to explain without apportioning blame or make excuses.

Useful Website Addresses:

Please note, the following sites are maintained by third party organisations and neither North Devon Council nor North Devon Plus are responsible for the accuracy of any information they contain. You should exercise the usual security precautions when viewing external websites.

Outsource Accelerator – Top 10 UK Service Companies:

<https://www.outsourceaccelerator.com/guide/top-uk-customer-service-companies/>

Examples of online sources of info about creating a good first impression:

<https://modernretail.co.uk/first-impressions-how-to-create-a-memorable-in-store-experience/>

<https://blog.bindy.com/how-retailers-can-create-a-positive-first-impression/>

The Selling For Creatives (delighting your customers Factsheet has been prepared by North Devon Plus as part of the Flourishing Barnstaple Programme
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Supported using public funding by



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