



Sales tips for business owners

Creating sales relationships through solutions

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Solutions vs products/services.....	2
Your sales challenges	2
I'm not confident in speaking to people	3
I don't know where to start.	4
I don't write well.....	4
I don't have time to sell.	4
Your sales goals.....	5
Understanding your target customer.....	5
The hierarchy of sales leads	7
Having the right tools	9
Dealing with objections.....	11
The followup.....	12

Introduction

As a small business owner, you know you have to sell in order to build and sustain your business. Selling can be done in a number of different ways, and the key to success is knowing who you're targeting, and finding the best way for you, personally, to make the sale.

Selling doesn't come naturally for most of us, so it's important to identify what obstacles you face when selling, and to arm yourself with the right tools to assist with your success.

In this e-book we help you to:

- Identify the sales actions in your business
- Identify the sales obstacles you have
- Identify your sales goals
- Understand the hierarchy of sales leads
- Understand your target customer
- Deal with objections
- Conduct effective followup
- Measure your success
- Put together your sales toolkit

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Solutions vs products/services

The key to making a sale is to identify the needs of the customer, and then provide them with what they want. Sales are not just about convincing someone to buy something they don't need; it's about understanding their needs and meeting them.

One of the most effective forms of selling is what is known as "solution selling". In essence, you focus on the customer and their needs. You address their painpoints or their visions and dreams.

We are faced with so many businesses and individuals trying to sell to us in almost every aspect of our lives. The noise is deafening, so it's important to be able to cut through to deliver your message. Creating a relationship, and adding a personal touch to your sales approach can make all the difference between someone buying from you, or someone buying from your competitor. You need to create the impression of trust, value and reliability in an easy to understand way.

The trick is to ensure you understand your customers, and potential customers, and what it is you are selling them – is it a product or service, or is it a solution?

Your sales challenges

You may be thinking, "I'm not a salesperson!" But you are. You just don't know it yet. If you want to grow your business, you need to start selling.

The first step is to understand what it is that is holding you back in terms of achieving sales. A lack of confidence is often the biggest obstacle to making the call to begin a sale. Ask yourself what it is that you're afraid of. Many of the issues of confidence can be dealt with through having the right tools and knowledge at your fingertips.

And, in much the same way as you will need to deal with the objections from potential customers, you also need to overcome the negative feedback you hear in your head that can hold you back from pursuing a sale.

The most successful salespeople are those who have the right mindset. They are usually positive, optimistic and confident in themselves. They believe that they can sell anything to anyone.



This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

To be successful in sales you will need to believe in yourself, so you can convince others to believe in you, and the products and services you are selling. Before you go into a sale visualize what you want to get out of the meeting or phone call, and see yourself getting it.

Be enthusiastic, but not over-the-top. You need to come across as genuine, authentic and trustworthy. Enthusiasm requires you be energized, so ensure you also give yourself the best chance of success through taking care of your health, including getting quality rest. You will find it harder to convince someone else you're enthusiastic and excited if you're struggling to maintain the energy to conduct a conversation.

Remember that you have two ears and one mouth. Good salespeople take the time to listen to their potential customers and to create a relationship. Put yourself in their shoes. Ask yourself how you would want to be spoken to or sold to, and chances are your target customer is no different.

The following are some of the personal obstacles you might encounter and some quick thoughts on how to overcome them:

I'm not confident in speaking to people.

There are different ways to sell to people, and sometimes they don't involve speaking one-to-one. You may find approaches in writing, using social media can provide the ice breaker you need to approach a potential target.

Confidence is often assisted through knowledge. Ensure you are armed with the knowledge you need about what it is you're trying to sell. It's always easier to articulate this if it's your own business, and you can add a bit of passion into the conversation.

You need to believe in what you're selling. Unless you're a really good actor, if you don't believe in what you're selling, then it's unlikely you will come across as confident, and that you will achieve a sale.

It's always easier to sell to someone you know, and building a relationship is often the key to ongoing sales, so consider doing your sales pitch to a friend or colleague, or find a comfortable group of people you can practice on that will be supportive and potentially provide you with constructive feedback. Local business groups can often provide that type of support.

A good question to ask yourself if you find it hard to make that first step is "what's the worst thing that could happen?". It's unlikely that you're going to live or die on the outcome of an unsuccessful sales call. The worst-case scenario is that the person will say, "No."

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

I don't know where to start.

This e-book should provide some of the pointers to know where to start, but the essential starting points are:

- Identify what you are selling
- Identify your target audience
- Get to know your target audience
- Reach out to your target audience

I don't write well.

This is probably true of many top salespeople because it's usually not the written word that persuades us to purchase, unless you run an online store which relies on social media and search engines to do your promotion. When it comes to face-to-face sales it is more how you come across verbally that will make the difference.

If you're worried about writing in front of a potential sales target, then ensure that you have apps and technology at your disposal. Type rather than write proposals, and let the app fix your English. Most of our sales targets will have email and may even be impressed that you're prepared to put it in writing so quickly. There are many apps today which allow you to put quotes together in contract form electronically and even get them signed electronically on the spot.

As well as poor grammar and spelling, sometimes salespeople worry their maths is also not up to scratch. Again, have tools at your fingertips that utilize technology to do the maths for you. This can range from the humble calculator through to apps that can do the calculations for you and present in a written form all at the same time.

I don't have time to sell.

Unless you can incorporate a salesperson within your team, your business's success will depend on you being able to sell, and that should be incentive enough to find the time.

Block out time in your calendar on a regular basis to undertake sales. If you find sales stressful, you might consider blocking out smaller periods several times a week rather than playing telemarketer for an entire day which can be energy draining and demoralizing if it's hard going.

Find the most efficient ways to sell. This could involve sending out written introductions with all the detail, and then just a followup call. You may be able to look at automating some of the sales processes – emails that include hyperlinks to make a purchase or sign a contract, or seek more information. If you have a wide number of target customers, this may be the most efficient option, a scattergun approach in the first instance to see how many immediate sales you get without having to physically do followup.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

You can also cut down on your “selling” time by ensuring you have the right marketing in place for your products and services. Good marketing will often create direct sales leads to you, and it’s always easier to sell to someone who has already shown an interest in your product and service than someone who has never heard about you before.

Your sales goals

It might sound silly, but you can’t sell effectively if you don’t know what it is you’re trying to sell, and what your goals might be. Being able to celebrate the success of your sales efforts will help give you incentive to keep selling, so if you don’t know how you’re tracking, you won’t know if you’re effective.

Before embarking on any sales conversation – written or verbal – be sure of what it is you’re trying to achieve. Is it securing a 1-year contract with a client? Is it selling X tonnes of your product? Is it securing a partnership with another business?

Ensure you set a realistic goal or budget and to regularly check on your progress. What you are selling, and the nature of your industry, will dictate what the goal will be and how often you’ll need to check on your progress. What is realistic for you? What will help keep you motivated to sell? Are they daily targets? Weekly targets? Monthly targets?

It should go without saying, but if you’re going to keep track of your sales success you need to ensure your figures are kept up to date, including your business financials. A business that leaves it until the end of the month (or worse) to tally up sales will find it very difficult to keep track of their success, and to see if they are hitting their sales goals.



Understanding your target customer

The first step in making the sale is understanding your target customer and their needs. This is often referred to as prospecting. Once you understand your target customer, it will be easier for you to identify the best way to approach them and present your products or services.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Once you have identified who your target customers are, it is time to make the sale by identifying their objections and overcoming them with a well-thought-out sales kit that includes everything from pricing information to testimonials.

So, how do you understand your target customer? Previous sales records, observation of in-person customers, and online reports such as social media followers and website analytics can often provide some insight into who your target market currently is.

Remember: Your target customer may be different for different products or services. If you are trying to target “everyone” at once it is going to make it harder for you to build a relationship with your target customers and to reach them, so you need to try to break them down into smaller target groups.

Take some time to identify as many details as possible about your target customer. Try closing your eyes and visualizing your target customer, and put yourself in their shoes. Some people find it worthwhile to name their target customer and to also have a photograph (clipped from a magazine or off the internet) to assist with visualization.



Here's some aspects of your customer to visualize and consider:

- Gender
- Location
- Age
- Interests
- Family situation
- Economic situation
- Employment
- Media preference
- How do they communicate
- Language
- Pain points
- Visions and dreams

If you can create the persona of your target customer you're going to be able to better meet their needs, connect with them and create a relationship that can result in not one, but hopefully many sales. Their persona will give you intelligence on how they might prefer to be approached, where you can reach them, the common points you can talk about in a one-to-one or networking opportunity, and the language you might use in any communication.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Although we can never hope to cover every person's objections to buying your product or service, having a persona for your target customer will certainly help you to be prepared for many of them.

When speaking with a prospective customer ask relevant questions that help you understand their painpoints, visions and dreams. Ideally, do some research beforehand to be able to put yourself in their shoes. Ask meaningful questions that can lead to you being able to meet their painpoint with your product or service.

The hierarchy of sales leads

When starting out in sales it's great to be able to kick some easy goals so consider the hierarchy of sales. The following are the five types of potential lead opportunities, listed in order of ease to sell to.

1. A previous purchaser
2. Someone who makes an inquiry
3. Someone who purchases a similar product/service
4. Someone you have made contact with
5. Someone you've never had contact with

A previous purchaser is the easiest to sell to as they are familiar with your product or service, hopefully trust your brand as a result of their purchase, and you may already have their contact details. This customer requires less effort as you don't need to go through the dance of explaining what your brand is about. A previous purchaser can often be easily targeted through a mailing list, a loyalty program, offers of discounts and competitions. You will have the most success with these people through creating meaningful relationships and to keep them happy so they will then, in turn, talk about your brand to others in a positive light. Think about McDonalds – why do they ask you if you want fries with that? The fact is you are more likely to purchase the fries if you're already buying, than if you hadn't gone into the store in the first place. Why do you think there are so many loyalty programs these days? It's an easy opportunity to retarget a previous customer.



Someone who makes an inquiry is what is often termed a qualified lead. They have already shown an interest in your product or service. This is where good customer service can make all the difference. Ensure their inquiry is answered in a timely and professional manner, with language conducive to creating a relationship. If the inquiry is made online it's often easy to add them into an automated customer journey experience through emails. If you're "old school" you can always ensure you make a note to follow them up in the future by phone to see if you can assist them.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Someone who purchases a similar product or service flags to you that this person already has identified a need or desire for your product or service. Meta (the parent company of Facebook) recognizes this in its advertising target opportunities, encouraging businesses to use its look-alike audience options, targeting people who have engaged with brands similar to yours. Outside of platforms like social media it may be hard to find these people, but business to business sales can often be much easier. Some examples might include:

- A business card printer networking with a businessperson who hands them a business card;
- Website service providers hammering our inboxes because they've sourced our contact details from our website.

Someone you've made contact with means you have made the first step beyond the cold call. If you have interacted with someone, even if they've never made a purchase, then you have crossed a significant hurdle to achieving a sale. This is why attending networking events and representing your brand wherever you are, and whenever, is important. In your day-to-day life you can be a great ambassador for your brand being able to make contact with potential customers and start a journey towards a customer relationship. It may be as simple as meeting someone in the supermarket, and being able to hand over a business card, or simply saying "hello" while you're wearing your branded clothing. You can effectively be making steps towards sales without knowing it. Never forget you are always a representative of your brand no matter where you are and what time of the day or night.

Someone you've never had contact with sends shivers down the spine of many of us as a sales target. We know ourselves that we hate getting cold calls, almost as much as having to make cold calls. This is where it is important to really have an understanding of your target customer, not on a personal level, but on a general level. The best cold callers (telemarketers) are those who do their research and are confident in dealing with objections. You can cushion the stress of a cold call, and improve your chances of success, but creating a less obtrusive approach in the first instance – an email or physical mailout of introduction with a promise to give them a call. If you are making a literal cold call, make sure you have an email at the ready to provide a follow-up with more details if people don't have time to talk about it, or ask for permission to call again at a more convenient time. Ensure you are always courteous in these calls and respectful that people are busy, and usually you don't know what their situation is at the other end of the call. Remember: You will do your brand more damage than good if you get a clear message from the person you're calling, and you ignore it.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Having the right tools

Like any job in your business it is important to have the right tools to not only undertake the task, but to also measure success.

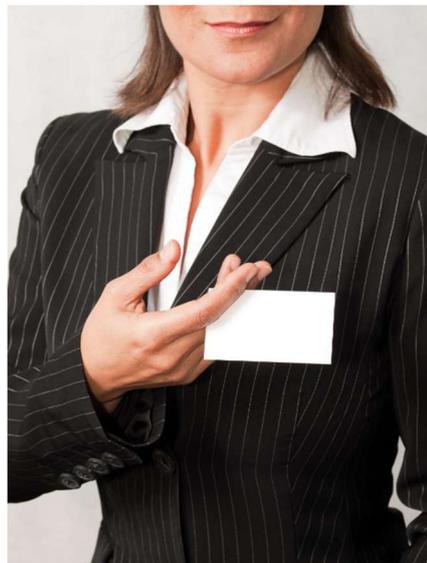
Your Pitch: You need to have your elevator pitch (a short spiel about who you are and what you're selling) down pat so it rolls off your tongue and sounds authentic, genuine and believable.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): We've already touched on the need to ensure you keep figures up to date in your business, and in your sales efforts. A salesperson is often expected to meet Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Some of these can include sales in dollar terms, sales in numbers of units, contacts to a set number of people and a percentage success rate eg 2 sales per 10 calls. Ensure you set yourself, or your salesperson, KPIs which are achievable and measurable, and that you ensure you continue to check progress against them regularly.

Customer Relationship Manager (CRM): You can choose to use some online CRM programs and apps, or you can go "old school" with spreadsheets, or even hand-written records. Essentially CRM is about ensuring you have accurate and easy to access records of the following:

- Contacts (usually segmented or tagged according to the type of contact they are, products/services they're associated with, what stage of the sales hierarchy they are in). This can include their contact details as well as notes of a more personal nature to help nurture and maintain the relationship.
- Records of when they were contacted and their response.
- Reminders for followup.
- Ways to maintain contact with them such as an email system or an automated customer journey.

Business cards: These are essential to enable the salesperson to easily leave their contact details with a prospective client. If you are dealing with people face-to-face the business card could be a physical card and/or an electronic business card. If you're making phone contact followed by an email the email signature should serve as a business card with all the details your contact may need to be reminded of you and your brand. Try to make your business cards stand out from the crowd (consider adding your photo) and make it easy to see what you do and how to contact you.



This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Promotional information: You should be armed with as much promotional material as possible to be able to easily explain who you are and what you are selling. Remember that not everyone takes in information in the same way so it's good to have visuals, and even links to videos or online material, at your fingertips so you can refer people to them if listening to your spiel is just not enough. Having something tangible – physical or online – will also help to reinforce your message. You are effectively tapping into more than one of a person's senses – hearing, touch and sight.

Diary/calendar: Whether or not you use a paper or electronic calendar you should have it ready to record opportunity for followup, and ensure you actually follow through with it.

Sales Call Sheet: Although you may be able to include this in your CRM, you can often be assisted by having a Sales Call Sheet in hard copy form, or online.

Some of the fields you can include are:

- Date of contact
- Business
- Contact name
- Phone
- Email
- Notes
- Followup date or action required
- Amount sold
- The offer

Notes: Ensure you have the ability to record notes – either online or handwritten – to be able to record what the person said, what their needs are, or anything that can assist with building a relationship, and potentially a sale in the future. Remember: This can even include noting that they are simply never going to be a customer, so you can focus on better prospects.

A smile and a positive attitude: Ensure you have a positive attitude and are well-rested before embarking on any sales initiative. No-one will be motivated to buy from you if they don't sense genuine enthusiasm and energy from you.

FAQs: Have a list of frequently asked questions at your fingertips so you can answer as many potential objections and customer questions as possible. A good salesperson won't need to access a document or online source as they will have learned the FAQs to heart, but if you haven't it's always good to have them online to make for easy searching and response. Don't forget too that if you can't answer someone's question, you can always offer to get back to them which demonstrates good customer service and effectively moves a cold call customer up to a customer who has made an inquiry.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

Dealing with objections

You've no doubt heard the term forewarned is forearmed. This is definitely the case when it comes to dealing with objections from potential customers. If you already have some idea of the types of objections your sales targets are likely to raise, then you're able to be better prepared with a response. This is why understanding your target customer, having your frequently asked questions at your fingertips and pre-preparing for some of the more likely objections are important strategies.



You can even head off objections by including response to some of the more common objections in your sales spiel, or get the upper hand by asking questions that you know are going to get the person to raise the common objections.

As we said earlier, successful sales can depend on how well you listen. If a potential customer is making an objection make sure you listen carefully so you can fully understand what their objection is and, if possible, where that objection is coming from.

Here are some common objections to consider and prepare a response to:

- I don't need it – explain the difference it will make to their life;
- It's too expensive – ideally be able to quantify the difference it will make, or how your product/service is more cost effective than another;
- I already have one, or used one in the past without success – highlight your product or service's points of difference, which may include further development that has occurred to an earlier product of yours;
- I can buy one online cheaper – raise your point of difference with local service and accountability;
- I can do it myself – highlight time and money savings through having a product or other provider do it for them (particularly good for business to business services).
- I've just purchased XYZ from someone else – highlight your product or service's points of difference and also ask if you can contact them again in the future, particularly if it's for a consumable product.

When responding to objections be courteous, even if you think the objection is irrational. Treat the person with respect and don't try to pull the wool over their eyes with your response. Speak clearly and be prepared to explain in detail if that's what the situation warrants.

When dealing with a target's objections listen out for opportunities to schedule a follow-up or another reason to make contact with them again. This could include

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.

being able to contact them back with an answer to a question or contacting them again in the future because they don't need the product or service right now.

It's a good idea to keep a record of the objections so you can try to understand why the person is objecting, but to also use as a training tool for you in the future as they're bound to come up again and again.

Remember: Everyone sees the world differently, and, even with the best visualization of your target customer, you cannot hope to know exactly what each individual has going on in their lives. There will be times when you simply aren't going to be able to overcome someone's objections, and it's OK to agree to disagree. You would be surprised the number of people who will respect you even more (and may ultimately come back and purchase) because they remember how positively you treated them, even if they were quite objectionable.

Recognise when enough is enough. In sales reflect on the words of the Kenny Rogers' song, The Gambler. You've got to know when to hold them, know when to fold them, know when to walk away, and know when to run. It's OK to walk away from the table sometimes.

The followup

The Rule of 7 states that a prospect needs to "hear" an advertiser's message at least seven times before they'll take action to buy that product or service. Although you'd hope it isn't going to take seven calls or in-person contacts with someone to achieve a sale, it certainly emphasizes the need to follow-up with people to achieve a successful sale.

If you make an approach to someone via email or a letter in the post – ensure you schedule in your diary to do a follow-up and, ideally, include in the written communication that you intend to do so. ***It is very rare that you will achieve a sale through one written communication.***

Successful online sales, particularly signups, are often achieved through multiple advertisements and email reminders. These are often tinged with special offers and limited time opportunities. When it comes to online contact there is a lot of noise you have to cut through to get your message heard, so the trick is to find the happy medium between making several sales pitches to break through the other distractions and spamming them. Ensure you plan out your customer journey and online strategy carefully so you don't appear desperate too. No-one wants to buy from someone who appears desperate as it makes you question the real value of the product or service.

After every sale, it's important that you identify what went wrong, why it went wrong, and how you could have done things differently. This way, you'll be able to avoid making the same mistakes in the future and will also be able to improve your current sales process as well as your skillset.

This document is copyright and must not be copied or reproduced electronically or in print without the written permission of the author, Carolyn Jeffrey or the management of CJ's Business Solutions.