

Note: This unit has been taken from the National Occupational Standards developed by the Marketing and Sales Standards Setting Body (MSSSB). The format of the unit is different to that used by the Management Standards Centre (MSC) for the units the MSC has developed.

UNIT OVERVIEW

What is the unit about?

This unit is about the activities involved within the sales cycle in matching products/services to customers' needs. It focuses upon face-to-face selling activity, and also applies to telephone contact. It includes generating sales leads, identifying customers' buying needs, promoting the features and benefits of relevant products/services, addressing queries/objections and closing sales with mutually beneficial terms and conditions.

Who is the unit for?

This unit is recommended for those involved in the selling of their organisation's products/services, but are not necessarily sales specialists. For example, such individuals might be 'general' managers within larger organisations, or managers and/or proprietors within small to medium-sized organisations.

Related specialist units

Those seeking specialist standards offering greater depth regarding this area are referred to the following related MSSSB units:

Sales units 7.1. Generate and follow up sales leads, 7.2. Sell products and services face-to-face, 7.5. Manage and facilitate case negotiations, 7.6. Handle objections and close sales, and 7.8. Demonstrate compliance with legal, regulatory and ethical requirements. Details of these units can be accessed via www.msssb.org.

OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

You will need to:

1. Contact customers identified as sales leads, accessing those who can make buying decisions
2. Identify customer requirements through careful questioning, checking for understanding and summarising their buying needs and interests
3. Identify the key features and associated benefits of your relevant products/services, relating these to the needs identified
4. Discuss and assess with the customer those of your products/services which are suitable for their needs
5. Evaluate potential trade-offs, whereby particular aspects of the product/service's package might be enhanced whilst others of lesser importance might be reduced, which will be beneficial both to the customer and to your organisation

6. Provide accurate information and make proposals regarding products/services and pricing, where relevant, that meet the customer's requirements
7. Explore any queries or objections raised by the customer and identify any reasons holding the customer back from agreeing the sale
8. Identify and prioritise any concerns, and provide evidence to the customer of the strengths of your organisation and its products/services relevant to addressing the concerns
9. Check that the customer agrees how any concerns can be overcome
10. Interpret verbal and non-verbal buying signals given by the customer and act upon them accordingly in progressing towards closing the sale
11. Close the sale by gaining the commitment of the customer
12. Agree future contact arrangements, including post-sales calls to confirm customer satisfaction where relevant
13. Record all required details accurately and clearly
14. Fulfil all relevant legal, regulatory and ethical requirements

BEHAVIOURS WHICH UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

1. You present information clearly, concisely, accurately and in ways which promote understanding
2. You show respect for the views and actions of others
3. You work towards 'win-win' solutions
4. You keep promises and honour commitments
5. You work to develop an atmosphere of professionalism and mutual trust

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

General knowledge and understanding

1. The difference between influencers and decision makers and their relative roles in the decision-making process
2. The key stages in the sales cycle, and how to use this effectively in structuring the sales approach
3. The importance of listening effectively, and of confirming understanding
4. The importance of effective questioning techniques and how to use these
5. The difference between features and benefits, and how to use these effectively in selling
6. The typical range of behaviours displayed by customers, including body language, and how to respond to these constructively in a sales situation

7. Typical objections that can arise in a selling situation, including the difference between sincere and insincere objections, and how to manage these effectively
8. Effective methods for closing sales

Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

1. Legal, regulatory and ethical requirements impacting upon selling in your sector

Context specific knowledge and understanding

1. Your organisation's sales plans and objectives, including its target market, key customers and their requirements from your products/services
2. Your organisation's products/services, and their features and benefits
3. Your organisation's structure and lines of decision-making
4. Competitor sales activities, and key features of their products/services
5. Your own sales targets and plans for achieving these
6. Your organisation's sales process and procedures, including recording requirements
7. Available literature and materials to support the selling process