



TOOLKIT 17 – REMOVING THE OBSTACLES YOUR CUSTOMERS FACE BUYING FROM YOU

- ❖ **Make it easy for customers to do business with you.**
- ❖ **Boost your sales revenue.**
- ❖ **Banish your 'sales prevention officers'.**

Customers buy because they either want to resolve a problem or take up an opportunity.

They normally expect to get something more valuable to them than the money they invest. However, companies sometimes put obstacles in the way of their customers buying from them. Here are the ten steps to helping customers to buy, which successful companies have used to boost their sales.

STEP 1 **Make the offer clear**

Customers won't buy unless they clearly understand what you are offering them, so make it easy to understand your offer. Ambiguity and surprises for customers are deadly. Keep your offer simple and clear, e.g.,

- 'The package includes the holiday, flights, transport to and from the airport and all meals. There are no extra costs.'
- 'If you can buy it cheaper anywhere else in the UK we will refund the difference. There is no small print or catches.'

Write your offer in one sentence.

Our offer is

.....
.....

If you can't explain it it's highly likely that your customers will find it confusing as well and you may well be losing sales opportunities as a result.

STEP 2 **Explain what's in it for them**

Customers want to know what's in it for them personally. Tell them how their life will improve and why it's worth their investment, e.g.,

'Undertaking our meditation programme will significantly reduce your blood pressure and anxiety. This will significantly reduce your risk of heart attack or stroke. The programme increases your life expectancy by at least 10 years for £500. That's got to be a good investment.'

List here what's in it for your customers and how their life will improve:

Q. Does your offer contain the 'wow' factor? (I.e., when I read the benefits of meditation they made me feel wow! I want some of this -)

E.g., Apply the Tesco WIBBIT test: Would I buy it? Tesco train all their staff to ask this question as part of their quality culture.

- **Manage your customers' expectations.**

Don't over-promise and then let customers down. In fact, do the opposite, it works wonders, i.e., under-promise then over-deliver.

E.g., 'We will get it to you by Friday' and then deliver it the next day.

Customers don't mind extended lead times or your problems with delivery providing that you inform them early and manage their expectations. Like you, the thing they want least of all is SURPRISES.

STEP 3 Deliver the product/service really fast

The faster you can deliver your product or service the more sales you will get. Customers compare your delivery performance with the fastest they get. I know it's unfair, but that's how it is, e.g.,

- Neat Ideas grabbed a share of the office products market originally by offering 24 hour delivery.
- Huddersfield Ready Mix gained a 50% price premium by delivering ready mix concrete the same day. The norm was next day delivery.

Also if a customer raises a query or requests more information to help them make a purchase decision, then provide it at lightning speed which says to them, 'We want your business, we are keen, we will work hard on your behalf.'

Q. How could you speed up the delivery of your product/service in order to boost your sales?

STEP 4 Banish any 'sales prevention officers'!

Review your sales process through your customers' eyes. Get someone to 'mystery shop' your business and give you feedback.

Where are the sales prevention officers in your business? These are the people who make it hard for your customers to buy from you, i.e.,

- Telephone operators who are rude or unhelpful to customers.
- People not returning customers' telephone calls promptly.
- People making it difficult for customers to do business with you.
- The nay sayers – 'No we can't do that ...'

Q. Where are your sales prevention officers and what do you intend to do about them?

STEP 5 What if they don't like your product?

Some customers won't take the risk of buying in case they don't get what they expect. Offer the best guarantee you can afford. State your guarantee clearly and in detail. An unconditional money back guarantee will create the most sales because it eliminates all the customers risk, e.g., no quibble money back if not satisfied. 'If you are not delighted with our product and return it within 10 days and we will give you your money back.'

Q. What's your guarantee to your customers?

Q. Is it strong enough?

STEP 6 Remove any doubts in your customers' minds

A prospective customer will not buy from you until you remove all doubt in his or her mind that you can and will deliver exactly what you promise. Testimonials are a powerful tool you can use to accomplish this. They provide proof you've already delivered satisfaction to other customers.

TIP: Avoid using any claim that sounds exaggerated, even if it's true. Bold claims create doubts in customers' minds and may jeopardise the sale. Reduce any bold claims to a more believable level.

Example

'Here is a list of my existing customers. If you pick any three I will send you their telephone contacts so that you can check us out.'

'Jack Jones helped us to increase our sales by 20% in one year.'

Fred Smith, CEO
Space Design

Q. What testimonials/evidence do you provide in order to remove any doubts about you in your customers' minds?

Q. Do you have evidence to convince your customers?

STEP 7

Get your customers to experience the product or service so they sell it to themselves.

A picture is worth 1,000 words but a trial is worth 1,000 pictures. Get your customers to trial or try your products.

EXAMPLE

Adele McGee who does sales training for large fashion stores understands the benefits of encouraging ladies to try on clothes. '70% buy if you get them to try on the clothes they select. However less than 10% who say they will return without trying on the clothes actually come back. The message is get them into the changing rooms!'

Smart car salespeople try to get people to drive a car so they sell it to themselves. Advertisers put you behind the wheel of the car in their adverts.

Q. How do you give your customers an experience of your product/service so that they sell it to themselves?

Step 8

Give your customers good reasons to buy

Customers normally make emotional decisions to purchase goods or services and also they normally buy from people they like. They then search for evidence and information to confirm to them that they have made the right decision.

Heart comes first, head comes later.

This is the time to tell them how much research went into developing your product or service. Provide them with independent evaluations and factual evidence, in order to help them to justify their emotional decisions to themselves.

Example

'There are now over 300 independent studies which demonstrate the connection between meditation and the reduction in blood pressure.'

Q. What evidence do you provide to your customers to help them to see that their decision was wise?

Q. WIBBIT?

STEP 9 **Make it easy to buy**

Did you ever walk out of a shop empty handed rather than wait in a long queue for people to take your money? Make sure customers find it quick and easy to complete the purchase transaction, e.g., it took 30 minutes for a sales person to find and sell me a book in a London bookstore. It took me 3 minutes to order the same book from Amazon.com

Q. How quick and easy is your sales transaction process?

- Look for opportunities to sell more products.

E.g.,

B & Q sales staff ask, 'Have you been able to get everything you wanted today?' Very often this leads to customers replying 'I couldn't find x.' So they get it for the customer and sales increase by 10% overall on average.

STEP 10 **Ask for testimonials**

If you have completed steps 1–9 so far as described in this toolkit you should have a delighted customer. So ask them for a testimonial. Use your existing delighted customers to sell to others.

Don't be afraid to ask if you have done a good job.

SUMMARY

Make sure your buying process is simple, easy and fast. Help your customers buy from you by reviewing and acting upon these ten steps. Remember to include in your review your website and all your sales tools. Assess them rigorously; do they meet the principles set out in this toolkit? If not, revise them so they do.

You will see an immediate increase in the number of sales you get.