

Welcome to Professional Vehicle Selling

Thank you for choosing the “Professional Vehicle Selling” course.

Course aims

This course has been written to help you understand how a vehicle selling works, and breaks down the steps you need to take for consistent successful vehicle sales. It provides you with a logical structure, guidelines, tips and practical exercises to help you develop and refresh your skills.

If you're new to the subject and want to find out how to become a professional in this industry, you'll find the contents of great value. For those already experienced in vehicle sales, this course will provide a valuable reminder and highlight techniques that you may not have used for a while.

Learning method

We recommend that you first look at the contents, and browse through each section, to give you an overview of the material. While it's tempting to jump ahead, we recommend that you proceed step by step through the sequence of each unit.

Assessments: This course comprises of six units, each with a simple self-assessment activity. You can use these activities to test your own understanding of each section. If you're not sure, go back and look at the unit again. At the end of the course, there is a final exercise to help you summarize your learning, and develop your own action plan.

Learning Log: It's also worth keeping a Learning Log, [like a diary] to reflect on your own development, summarise what you have learned, highlight areas which you found interesting or challenging, and make notes about further actions planned, reading and research. In this Learning Log you can also make a note of your own personal objectives, so that you can check these as you go through the course to make sure that your objectives are being met.



Exercises: The exercises in this course are designed to help you:

- Understand and apply the information you have just read
- Reinforce the reading matter
- Summarise what you have learned in your own words

Course content

In the sequence of six units you will cover the following topics:

- Identifying and generating selling opportunities
- Conducting the sales negotiation
- Appraising and valuing used/ part exchange vehicles
- Handing over the vehicle
- Planning and organising your personal work schedule
- Forecasting, monitoring and evaluating sale performance
- Effective working
- Systems, procedures and practices
- Effective communications
- Designing and implementing a sales plan
- Contributing to marketing activities



Course structure and breakdown of topics

- Unit 1** **Identifying and generating selling opportunities**
Understanding the process
Where to start?
Types of customers
Making a sales plan
Contribution to marketing
- Unit 2** **Conducting the sales negotiation**
AIDA & GASTOS
Preparing for conducting sales
Creating a positive relationship with the customer
Generating customer interest in your vehicles
Questioning skills
- Unit 3** **Progressing the sale**
Selling with FAB
The test drive
Handling objections and buying signals
Obtaining a commitment from the customer
Agreeing the terms of the sale
Everything is negotiable
- Unit 4** **Part exchange vehicles/Finance and Warranties**
Identifying the vehicle status
Assessing its condition
Dealing with the finances
Warranties and extras
Handing over the vehicle
- Unit 5** **Organisation**
Planning and organising your personal work schedule
Personal organisation
Ten time management tips
Forecasting and monitoring sales objectives
Evaluating sales performance
- Unit 6** **Effective working**
Professional working
Contributing to planning
Systems, procedures and practices
Dealing with Complaints
Effective communications
Designing and implementing a sales plan



Time guidelines

Experience has shown that the course will take about 12 -16 hours to complete. Don't be concerned if it takes you more or less than this average time. Your main objective should be to understand the methods explained, and think how you would apply the course in your working life. I suggest you do not spend more than 2 hours a day studying.

Here are some estimated times for completing each unit:

Unit 1	Two hours	40 min
Unit 2	Two hours	
Unit 3	One hour	55 min
Unit 4	One hour	45 min
Unit 5	One hour	30 min
Unit 6	Two hours	30 min



Unit 1 Identifying and generating selling opportunities

Vehicle Selling - The Sales Process

Think of selling as a process; both you and the customer will start off somewhere, proceed through a number of stages and eventually reach an end point - a successful conclusion where both parties are happy with the outcome. There are five key stages in the vehicle sales process, supported by good management skills:

- 1 Identifying and generating selling opportunities
- 2 Conducting the sales negotiation
- 3 Appraising and valuing used/part exchange vehicles
- 4 Finance, Warranties and extras
- 5 Handing over the vehicle

In this section we will be covering the following:

- Where to start?
- The best sources
- Pursuing sales opportunities.

Where to start?

Very often customers will just wander into your showroom, or contact you by the telephone, or increasingly email. This is great and helps make your life easier, but the most successful salespeople are both persistent and proactive about finding and developing prospects, in other words, potential customers.

Whether you are working in an existing showroom, trading from home, or starting up on the Internet, you will need to spend time considering what type of customers you want, and where you will find them.



What type of customers?

Look at the list below, and decide what type of customers you want to have. You are more likely to want a mix of customer types, so indicate in percentage terms how your ideal customer base would be made up.

Percentage of total

Business

Large local companies
Small/medium local companies
Other traders
Commercial vehicle users
Specialist car businesses
Other (specify)

Consumer

Local residents
Second car purchasers
Teenage car purchasers
Specialist car enthusiasts
Sports car buyers
Single brand buyers
Diesel car buyers
Other (specify)

Total

100%

Exercise A

Time guide: 10 min.

If you had to start from scratch where would you start looking for prospects?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.





Maybe you would carry out some research by:

- Looking in handbooks or directories found in commercial/business libraries, such as Kompass, Kelly's or Applications and Decisions (for commercial vehicles)
- Looking in newspapers/magazines, perhaps with job advertisements offering company cars
- Contacting Chambers of Commerce, who will have information about businesses in your area
- Identifying local businesses who might need cars for both business and personal use
- Checking the web site of your local community
- Networking with local business groups
- Building a business relationship with a local driving school/college

Perhaps there are some marketing activities you could undertake, for example:

- The telephone can be used for research (to establish who are the decision-makers in companies) and appointment making
- Leafleting a local housing estate
- Developing contacts with related businesses, e.g. accessory shops, tyre/exhaust outlets
- You could use the data you have collected from the telephone research to send out an introductory letter outlining your products and services
- You could also conduct promotions and advertising which will attract people in to view your vehicles

Think about:

- local newspapers
- specialist car sales papers, websites, and magazines
- local radio
- sponsoring a local event, e.g. junior football matches (to reach the parents)
- posters and signs-so that people can find your site
- open evenings – to encourage viewing of your range
- business cards available through other people



Can you think of others? Write them in here, so that you can refer back to them later.

The key to successful prospecting is to get your sales leads from a range of different sources. Don't rely on just one – this may dry up one day!

Identify the decision-maker

At this stage try to establish who the decision-maker is:

Is it the wife or the husband?
The teenager or parent?
The driver or business owner?
Perhaps both?

Or, if you are selling to a business, identify who in the organisation makes the final decision, who has authority? This will help ensure that you focus your selling skills on the right person. Remember it may be necessary to change your selling approach depending on who you are speaking to, for example an accountant may be more concerned with cost efficiency, while a sales person maybe more concerned with driveability and prestige.

The best source- existing customers

Whatever you do, do not overlook what could be your best source of potential sales - your existing customers. Keep in regular contact with people who bought one, two or three years ago - they will want to change their car eventually and you need to be there when they do.

This is called the buying cycle - people tend to buy regularly and you need to understand and anticipate when they are planning to buy next.

In addition, because they are existing customers you have the advantage of knowing much more about them, and in turn, they will be much more amenable to you because you have already established a relationship with them.



It is essential to keep accurate and detailed records of all enquiries and sales. You can keep them in a card index box, but most businesses use a computer system. In either case, because you are keeping personal details, you must register with the Data Protection Registrar. It does not cost very much, and your legal advisor can help you to complete the forms.

Your database of customers and prospects will become one of your most important assets, so you as the Vehicle Selling Professional should ensure that it is kept up to date, and only authorised staff are allowed to access it.

Together with your site, your brand and your stock, your prospect list is one of the key ingredients for successful selling.

Pursuing sales opportunities

Once you have identified your prospects/potential customers, you need to take action to pursue the opportunities. You should ensure that:

- Sales leads are dealt with promptly and efficiently
- Contact with customers is made at the appropriate time and using the appropriate method - face to face, phone, letter
- Customers should always be treated in a courteous, tactful and professional manner
- You are aware of the decision makers and influencers - very often this group includes children, who may have a big part to play in the final decision, if they are present during the test drive
- You are able to talk knowledgeably about the vehicles and services you offer, and are able to convey this clearly and accurately to the customer, checking their understanding as you go
- If you have agreed to follow up on something after an initial meeting, ensure you do

Even if the discussion leads to no sale, always ensure that you keep a note of the customer's details and the reason for not buying this time round; there could always be a next time!

Designing and Implementing a Sales Plan

Planning is an important process. It allows the organisation to predict where it will be and to organise its resources accordingly. The following is a list of crucial stages in the planning process. You may be involved in writing the plan. No matter what your role is, you should always aim to support the production and implementation of the sales plan.



A sales plan must have quantifiable and clearly defined objectives. Many businesses use the **SMART** mnemonic- Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Timely.

Specific- not just increase sales, or sell cars, but actual values

Measurable – indicate value and profit anticipated

Agreed – agree with your boss, your bank, or your business adviser what you think you can do – it will act as an incentive for you

Realistic – if it is too easy, you will become lazy, and if too hard you will be intimidated. Use your best judgement, based on capital, location, estimated market size, and amount of time you (and colleagues) can spend on the sales side. Remember there will be other things to do, (see Unit 6), so selling 14 hours a day, 7 days a week, will not leave you time to do your paperwork, book advertising, make phone calls, and think!

Timely- Give yourself a timescale and work to it. Allow for a slow start and remember that some months are traditionally slow for car sales- December, July.

In the case of large dealerships, the target could be a specific number of units sold in the month or quarter, often linked to the bonus structure. Small independents need to consider the profit per unit, as well as number of units sold, to reach a specified target profit.

Exercise B

Time guide: 10 min.

Write your own SMART objectives here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- A sales plan must include a practical action plan(s) for achieving the objectives
- All relevant people should be consulted, both in the construction and the implementation of the plan
- All sales targets should be agreed and be achievable, and have sufficient resources, for example number of salespeople, to achieve them
- Finally you have to be continually reviewing actual performance against the plan and take action if necessary

You will be asked to prepare an Action Plan at the end of Unit 6.





Contributing to Marketing Activities

You are in the front line. Each day you will spend time talking to existing and potential customers, and you will therefore understand the prevailing market conditions, what and who you are competing against, what really interests your customers and so on..... In fact you are the closest thing your organisation has to a customer yourself!

You should ensure that you are gathering information and passing it to whoever is responsible for Marketing in your organisation. It is likely your Marketing Plan will be based around the Marketing Mix - often remembered as the 4 P's:

- **Product**, i.e. the vehicles and services you offer
- **Place**, i.e. your method of distribution, perhaps through other dealers or your own staff
- **Promotion**, i.e. advertising, mailshots etc.
- **Price**, including special offers, payment terms etc.

Ensure you gather and pass on feedback about your own organisation's effectiveness in these areas. In addition, pass on information about how your competitors are performing in each of these areas. Examples of practical ways you can do this are:

- Ask your customers where they first heard of you, why they came in to see you - was it in response to a mailshot, did they see an advertisement, and if so which one? Make a note of the source on your enquiry cards. This will help you identify the best promotional methods, and the least cost-effective.
- Keep a record of any special promotions which your competitors may be running; you might want to phone them up asking for further details.
- Keep up to date with car magazines and relevant websites, forums, and blogs; what is 'hot' in the industry?
- Ask yourself whether the promotions your organisation is running are actually working; are they really meeting customer needs and wants? If not, then feed back to whoever is responsible your ideas about what may do the trick.



Well done – you deserve a break

now!



Assessment to Unit 1

Time guide: 45 mins

The purpose of this assessment is to help you apply the information in unit 1 to your own situation.

Please outline a plan of how you can generate sales leads. Include in the plan a quantifiable objective and an appropriate timescale for the different techniques used.

Objective	Actions	Who responsible	Cost	Done by (date)



Unit 2 Conducting the sales negotiation

Preparing for a sales encounter

It is always good practice to have some clear objectives every time you talk to a prospective customer. For example, this may be to ensure they have a favourable opinion of your vehicle over those of your competitors, or it may be to agree a price that ensures a sale but gives you a healthy profit.

You may already have relevant information from previous sales calls - always ensure that you are well briefed, perhaps from sales records you have kept. This will not only ensure that you do not look foolish because the customer is repeating information already conveyed, it may also help you to anticipate and successfully handle objections before they are raised.

Psychologists have identified 6 emotional reasons why people buy:

1. Profit or gain
2. Fear of loss
3. Pleasure
4. Avoidance of pain
5. Pride
6. Desire for Approval

Think how these can be applied in a vehicle sales situation.

AIDA

During the sales process you will go through the following selling stages with the customer.

ATTENTION. Initially you must get the customer's attention. You can do this by a polite and friendly greeting, a question, an observation, a smile, or a handshake. The important thing at this stage is to appear non-threatening, while taking control of the situation.

INTEREST. Car buyers are interested in benefits. You will see how to present benefits later in this Unit.

DESIRE brings in the emotional response to a vehicle. While people claim to be totally objective, especially with cars they can be very emotional.



Finally you must get the customer to ACT. Go into every sales encounter with your own objectives- decide which car you would like to sell, which you will allow him/her to buy, and even if you cannot meet his needs today, ensure his experience will encourage him/her to recommend you to his friends, and come back another time.

The subsequent sections outline these stages in much more detail, but it is useful to remember the mnemonic AIDA.

GASTOS

Another mnemonic which you may find helpful is GASTOS - the stages towards the sale when you are face to face with the customer.

Greeting and Qualification

Accountability (why they should buy from you)

Specifics (honing in on THE CAR)

Test drive

Objections

Sale

Greeting and qualification

This is the probably the first time the prospect has met you, so make sure this first impression is a lasting one for all the right reasons. Ascertain how much time you should spend with this person by asking relevant questions. You will find out how much they think they want to spend, on what type of car and when they want to spend it. As your skills grow, you will be able to spot the timewasters. However, beware of making assumptions based on appearance.

Example:

A car dealer observed a potential customer coming into his showroom. She was wearing jeans, t-shirt, and had not spent a long time at the mirror. She looked at the most expensive cars in the showroom. The dealer approached in a polite and friendly manner, treated her with courtesy and respect, and sold the most expensive car in 35 minutes, for cash. The customer had just returned from a contract overseas, cashed some of her accumulated pay, and was ready to buy.

Accountability

All along, you are selling yourself, but at this stage you must also sell the company you work for. People like to buy cars especially from places that have been established with a good reputation. Try to make up a portfolio of customer letters of approval, the more the better. All people want to know, is that if their car goes wrong, they can bring it back to get repaired with the minimum of fuss, cost and inconvenience.



Specifics

You should now start to show the prospect a few cars of the type that will suit, leading to the one you both agree would be ideal.

Hot tip! Remember to always show a prospect a car slightly above their budget.

If you show them one below, they are more likely to look elsewhere because they will assume that they can get a better or newer version elsewhere, for the budget they would like to spend.

Test Drive

The test drive is an essential part of vehicle selling. Whether new or pre-owned vehicles, drivers identify very strongly with their cars, and only a test drive will ensure their needs are met.

All the information you have gathered about the customer now has to be used. You should have worked out which vehicle(s) will suit their needs/wants and you have established trust between yourself and the customer.

You should now get the customer behind the wheel.

Make sure the decision-maker is in the driving seat and adjust the seat positioning for them to ensure their comfort. At this point it is worthwhile describing the vehicles features and advantages, and in particular how the features will benefit the customer.

Objections

Objections are where a customer:

- Wants to bring the price down
- Is thinking about the car, but would like it to have other benefits
- Needs reassurance that this is the right car for him/her

Many sales people find objections disconcerting. However, they should be prepared for in advance, and looked on as a type of buying signal. After all, if the customer has not walked away, but maintains dialogue with you, there must be some interest there. It is your job to help the customer to see the benefits. Objections are dealt with in more detail later in this Unit.

Sale (= SUCCESS)



If you have successfully completed the above you will now get a written agreement signed between you and your customer (he/she is not a prospect any longer).

Creating a positive relationship with the customer

“Most sales fail through lack of knowledge- about the customer, or about the product sold.”

It is important that you establish yourself as a knowledgeable professional. You should therefore familiarise yourself completely with every car you are selling. This sounds like common sense, but is often neglected.

Imagine being caught red faced if you couldn't open a boot or a bonnet?

Even ordinary vehicle derivatives have an impressive options list nowadays – air conditioning, power steering, ABS, for example. You must familiarise yourself with their operation and benefits. Try also to learn about the features and options on your competitors' vehicles, establishing areas where your vehicles and/or your company have a Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

It is worth preparing a written list of USPs for each vehicle or type of vehicle- this will give you three major benefits:

You will be better equipped to answer questions, point out plus factors and make that sale.

You will be enhancing your knowledge of a wider range of cars- after a while, you will have an encyclopaedic knowledge of your vehicle sector.

You will have training material to pass on to your new employees, as your business grows.

Example:

If you are selling to a married woman with three young children, are you even going to bother opening the bonnet to show her what an engine with 140 BHP (DIN) looks like? She only wants to know that the children will be safe and comfortable – she assumes the vehicle she is buying does have an engine, which is reliable.

Similarly, another prospect may be very interested in the technical specification, so you do have to know it in order to answer technical questions.

Hit the right nail on the head, not the wrong one.



First impressions

You should always present yourself as you would want to be greeted - remember first impressions are crucial. Some useful tips are:

- Smile and maintain eye contact - but make sure it is genuine and unobtrusive
- Dress according to the environment you work in - a suit may be appropriate, or it may not, but always be smart and presentable; collars should be clean and shoes well polished and not down-at-heel
- Keep a comb/brush in your desk (for wet/windy days)
- Keep a clothes brush handy (for the dog hairs you will pick up in many part exchange vehicles)
- Clean nails, clean, cool not clammy hands, and a firm but not overpowering handshake are essential
- Be confident and sincere, not pushy or insincere.
- Smokers should carry mints, for fresh breath
- Business cards should be clean, not bent, and have all current information
- Do voice exercises early in the morning, so that your voice sounds clear, confident, and warm. Lowering the pitch of your voice, and speaking more slowly, will help you to sound more authoritative and in control – try it!
- Always carry 2 pens, and a small notebook, or keep an A4 size notepad on your desk. You never know when you may want to write something down.
- Your desk should look tidy- you want to appear efficient, don't you?
- Watch your body language. Adversaries line up directly opposite, to see the enemy more clearly, while nervous people invade the space of others. Folded arms are a defensive position, and hands in pockets can look as if you don't care.

At this point you should be trying to find out as much as you can about the prospect/customer - their partner's name, where they work, where they live etc. Look for non-verbal clues as well- badges that denote membership of local clubs, school uniforms from local schools, and the body language of the customer him/herself.



The more genuine interest you show, the better the rapport that will build up between you. This will lead to trust being established early on. You will be more likely to receive valuable information that will help you to satisfy their needs and wants.

Generating customer interest in your vehicles- questioning skills

To establish interest in your vehicles you must firstly understand the customer's needs and wants. People buy cars for a variety of different reasons. Some are very practical i.e. to get them from A to B; others will buy on cost, others on style.

It will help you if you understand the thinking behind the customer's decisions - the psychology involved. This is best done by asking the customer questions. Try not to ask closed questions i.e. questions that result in a yes/no answer. The more information a customer tells you, the easier it will be for you to match suitable products with their requirements. You can ask closed questions later, if you lead them so that the answer is likely to be "YES". If the customer is used to answering questions with "YES" they will be more likely to answer the critical question- do you want this car- with a YES.

Exercise A

Time guide: 15 min.

Imagine a new customer has walked into your showroom. This man, aged around 45, dressed casually, is with his wife and pre-teen daughter. You have observed that he has parked his car, a vintage Triumph, with great care. He may be looking for a runabout, a car for his wife, or have other requirements. What questions should you be asking in order to find out more about this customer's needs and wants?

Write your questions here:



How about asking these types of questions?

- WHY did the customer choose to look at your cars? It may be that your prices seemed reasonable, they were recommended by a previous customer of yours, something caught their eye or they saw an advertisement [try to find out which one to test your advertising effectiveness].
- WHEN are they planning to buy? If not now, then when, what is the reason for the delay? It could be they have a policy maturing; their current car will be paid off in two months time or any number of reasons. If this is the case then this is a good opportunity to gather information that can be used perhaps to keep the customer up to date and help them in their future buying decision.
- WHAT type of car they are interested in? Do they need an estate car, a hatchback or saloon?
- HOW MUCH have they budgeted for their car? Has the customer clearly thought about what they can reasonably afford - either cash or monthly instalments?

Exercise B - Develop your own questions portfolio Time guide: 15 min.

Based on what you have read above, write down 6 open questions you would now use:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



Exercise C

Time guide: 15 min.

Now write down 6 closed questions, where the answer would be YES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

By listening to the answers to these questions, you will have a good idea of customer intentions. At this stage some customers may only require further information; others may be giving you buying signals and it is important that you act upon them.

Exercise D - Listening

Time guide: - 15 min.

For this exercise, you will need a friend and a newspaper. Ask your friend to choose a piece out of a newspaper- around 10 paragraphs will do. When he/she has read it through silently, ask then to read it aloud, in a normal voice, at normal speed. He/she can then ask you some questions about the piece. Check how much you remember. Then repeat the exercise, with another story from the newspaper.

- Did you improve the second time?
- Did you catch names, or mistake them?
- Can you recall the very first 5 words?
- Did you lose interest half way through?

Listening is a skill, which if not practised, falls into disuse. The more practice you have now, the better you will be able to not just hear what a customer says, but listen and be ready to respond.

If the customer is showing clear buying signals then it is now important to gather more detailed information about their needs, interests and wants. For example you might want to try to get the answers to these questions:

- What is their name? (reintroduce yourself – they might have forgotten your name!)



- Who will be driving the car? (If 2 or more people will be driving, are they also decision-makers, and are they present?)
- Where will it be driven? (Motorways/urban/school runs/supermarket runs/off road, can all suggest which type of vehicle you should be steering the prospect towards.)
- Where do they live? (Are they local or do they live 500 miles away and just passing time.)
- What do they do for a living? (Whatever it is, look impressed and let them tell you how good they are, you will win friendship here.)
- Where do they work? (As above, but you may also know someone who works in the same place, which may be useful if they had previously bought a car from you that they were happy with.)
- Has the customer children/elderly relatives and if so, how old? (Safety for younger children, rear seat legroom and safety for older ones are on his mind as he/she tells you the answer.)
- What hobbies or interests do they have? (Will the boot carry 3 sets of golf clubs, for example)

If it is a company then you will want to find out additional information:

- How many company vehicles do they operate?
- What type of company is it?
- Do they lease or buy vehicles?
- Who is responsible for making the decision?
- Who is responsible for day-to-day operating/administration?

By this point you will have gathered a great deal of information about your customer. You should have developed rapport and trust with your customer. This will now enable you to give useful and relevant information about the vehicles and services you can offer. You are now ready to proceed to the next stage, features and benefits.



Well done – you deserve a break now!

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Assessment to Unit 2

What are the 6 emotional reasons why people buy?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

What does AIDA stand for?

- A -
- I -
- D -
- A. -

What does GASTOS stand for?

- G -
- A -
- S -
- T -
- O -
- S -



Unit 3 Progressing the sale

Selling with FAB (Features, Advantages and Benefits)

In order to sell effectively, you need to understand your product in terms of features- what it does, advantages, what it did better than before, or better than competitors, and benefits- what it does for the customer. In particular this will help you to match features and benefits to customer needs. The table below gives some examples of features, advantages and benefits.

Features, advantages and benefits

Features	Advantages	Benefits
Power steering	Makes parking easier	You will get into those gaps you never thought possible
Automatic	Optimises fuel economy	Reduces stress in busy road conditions
6 speed gearbox	Greater control	Puts fun back into driving
Air conditioning	Steady, controllable temperature	You will feel more comfortable
ABS brakes	Shorter stopping distances	Extra safety margin
Heated front screen	Clears faster than a blower	Lets your feet remain warm!
Electric sunroof	One finger operation	Less moving about in your seat/improved safety
Central Locking	Saves stretching over	Passengers won't get wet/break nails
Heated mirrors	Clears in no time	Quicker visibility to the rear
DAB radio	Better sound quality	More station choice

Exercise A

Time guide: 10 min.

Now think about the types of vehicles you normally sell. What features do they have and how are these features of benefit to the customer?



Hint: To find out if your selling statement is about features or benefits, just ask “so what?” after each one. You can also think about the customer saying, “what’s in it for me?”

Vehicle	Feature	Benefit
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

At this point, if the customer is still showing signs of interest, and everything feels fine, you must go for a test drive.

Test Drive Preparation

If a test drive has been pre-booked, make sure the car has warmed up, especially on cold days, and get the engine to normal operating temperature. If you have time, drive the vehicle ‘round the block’. This will remove any surface rust that may have built up on the brake discs which can sound quite alarming to the untrained ear. Always make sure the vehicle is clean, tidy and has sufficient fuel. (Some people are nervous trying out a “strange” car, so a flashing light on the petrol gauge, indicating low fuel, won’t assist in making them at ease whilst driving, despite your assurances.)

The Drive

It is usually better if you drive the vehicle first. By getting the car to a safe place, out of a crowded forecourt, you make it easy for the prospect to take over driving, without having to negotiate major junctions in the first minute. This prevents negative signals from the prospect. If you don’t have a problem, but the customer does, he/she can’t really blame the vehicle.

Choose your route carefully. Some people are happy with two miles of driving, others need more. If the vehicle will be used for town driving then drive in similar conditions. The same goes for motorway driving - try to get on to a dual carriageway at least.



Remember the new vehicle will feel and drive differently to the customer's current vehicle. It will take them a little while to get used to it. In the meantime, never comment on their driving, avoid smoking, or other indications of nervous behaviour, but do keep checking how they are feeling. At this point decisions are being made based on emotions, so feelings are critical.

At the end of the test drive ask the customer what they think of the vehicle. You may like to prepare some questions to help them decide.

Exercise B

Time guide: 15 min

Prepare some questions you could ask during and following a test drive:

Know the car you are selling, and highlight the benefits through carefully thought out questions. For example. In MPVs the visibility is good, so you might ask, how do you find the visibility?

You might have included some of these:

How did you find the steering?
How do you feel the car handled?
How did you find the brakes?
Did you like the performance of the car?
How comfortable did you feel?
How does this compare to your current vehicle?

Handling objections and obtaining a commitment from the customer

Many sales people become worried about objections, and tend to over-react. Objections are simply questions from the prospect, which indicate that he/she has been listening to you. They are actually a form of buying signal. The secret of dealing confidently with objections is to plan what they might be, and prepare clarifying questions, and answers expressed in terms of benefits to the customer.



Typical objections can be:

i) “It’s too expensive for my budget.”

Overcome by: “What could you afford on a monthly basis?” (then move into finance options- see Unit 4)

ii) “I really wanted one with alloy wheels”.

Overcome by: “So, if we could put a set of alloy wheels on it, would you buy it?”

iii) “I can’t afford it yet- can I wait 2 months?”

Overcome by: “We could arrange deferred payments through financing, so you wouldn’t have to pay anything for 3 months”.

iv) “I need to talk it over with my father/wife/husband/partner”.

Overcome by: “I understand it is a major decision. However I do have another customer interested in this particular model. Would you like to place a no obligation 24-hour holding deposit to secure it until you can come back?”

v) “I really wanted one with a sun roof”.

Overcome by: “If I can get you an identical car with a sunroof within a fortnight, would you be prepared to leave a deposit?”

vi) “Another dealer is offering £500 more on my trade-in”.

“Are we comparing identical cars?” (detail the specification of the car you are showing, and examine each point, e.g. engine size. Mileage, colour, spec.)



Exercise C - Overcoming objections

Time guide: 25 min.

Now write down some objections you think you may have, and the ways you will overcome them.

Objection:

Overcome by:

Objection:

Overcome by:

Objection:

Overcome by:

By this time you should have handled most of the objections. You have gained a lot of information about the prospect and you will have matched this with the appropriate vehicle.

However it is also possible that the prospect will still not be willing to proceed. You need to tactfully and sympathetically ask why, to understand their objections, so that you can overcome them and deal with their concerns.

Buying signals

At this stage the customer will very often be displaying buying signals - "Have you got one available in red?" or "How quickly could it be ready?" are two fairly obvious examples.



Exercise D

Time guide: 10 min.

List 5 buying signals you can think of or have recently experienced.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

You can recognise buying signals both verbally and through other indications:

He/she asks pertinent questions “Would you be interested in my car as part exchange?” The body language is clear- they lean forward, pick up a brochure/form, lots of smiling.

- I really need it for my holidays next week.
- They go to sit in it again
- They get family to sit in the back again

If they re-phrase an objection it means that they are interested, but the objection was not dealt with to their satisfaction in the first place. Use open questions to probe and find the real cause of their objection.

Alternatively, you could grasp the nettle and test the prospect’s willingness to buy, for example - “How would you like to pay the deposit, credit card, cheque, cash?”

Agreeing the terms of the sale

In every sale, you should both plan and expect to close. Keep your objective in mind at all times.

There are several different types of close:

The Direct approach “shall we go ahead?”

The Alternative close - “would you prefer the model with fewer miles, or the model with more extras and some extra miles?”

Immediate gain - “If you take this car today, I can give you an additional 3 months warranty”.



Assumptive sale - "I can see the car suits you – let's fill in the forms so that you can drive it away"

Recommended sale- "Given what you have told me about how you will use the car, I recommend this model, as it will give you reliability/safety/legroom in the back/comfort on long journeys/a smart appearance at work."

Negotiations

When you are getting close to the end of the Sales Process, you will find yourself actively negotiating with the prospect. Negotiation is a process in itself, and, although we do not have space to cover it fully in this workbook, here are a few tips that may come in handy:

Remember everything is negotiable:



Vehicle price
Extras
Servicing

Warranties
HP, payment terms
Trade in

The important thing in all negotiations is to put your self in the customer's shoes, and value any concession in his/her terms. For example, you may reduce the vehicle price, but also reduce the trade in- they think they are getting a deal, but very few customers have a realistic idea of the value of their own vehicle.

The variable factors listed above can all be included in the overall package you will negotiate with the customer - and some may represent higher value to the customer than to you, so try and find out which and perhaps offer those in return for maintaining the selling price.

- Be flexible - give on some things and take on others. Negotiation is a process of reaching mutually acceptable agreement - it's not a battle!
- Aim high - set yourself high goals on what you want to achieve
- Concede in small steps and expect the customer to concede in large steps in return
- Don't compromise too quickly - never 'split down the middle'. Hold out for what you believe represents good value for money
- Always negotiate what you believe is a reasonable deal - don't let prospects feel they are being ripped off, and don't let them think that they can rip you off!

At some point (hopefully!), the negotiation will be concluded and you will reach the point where you have agreed to sell and the customer has agreed to buy - agreement has been reached. It is now necessary to confirm the arrangements in writing so that both you and the customer are clear on what has been agreed. As a minimum you should record:

- A detailed specification of the vehicle
- The agreed selling price
- The method of payment (cash, HP)
- Payment terms, e.g. deposit of £x, balance on or before collection
- The trade in value and details of the trade in vehicle (if applicable)
- The proposed collection date and time

Both you and the customer should sign the document to confirm you are both happy with the details and the customer should take away one copy. You may have one or several copies depending on the requirements of your organisation.

Understanding the close



Closing the sale is sub consciously attempted after each objection has been overcome. Effectively you are asking the prospect to commit to an agreement, but there are ways to go about this that won't get the prospect feeling they have been pushed, rather they WANT to buy.

Using “If... and then”

Throughout the sales process you will have been asking the prospect “if” followed by a question, for example, “If I can put on a set of alloy wheels, would you buy the car?” in answer to an objection about plain wheel trims (try alternative wheeltrims first, of course). These are deliberately closed questions to which the answer has to be “yes”, unless there is another objection. The more times the prospect says yes the more he/she wants to buy the vehicle.

There will be a point where you should feel confident that you have a sale. You want to make sure that the prospect has no more objections to buying the vehicle. You have really been asking him to buy it since his first objection, so assume that the sale is on, and ask when he/she would like to take delivery.

Important point: The prospect should be sitting at your desk/table and away from the vehicle he/she is purchasing, at this stage.

At this point start the agreement form (order form), if there is no part exchange or finance to consider. You could now have 2 possible objections – part exchange value and monthly payments.



Well done – you deserve a break now!



Assessment to Unit 3

What does FAB stand for?

F -

A -

B -

List 6 questions you would ask after a test drive:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

When negotiating, everything is negotiable. List 6 items on which to negotiate:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.



Unit 4 Part-exchange vehicles / Finance and Warranties

Identify the vehicle status

This is necessary to establish that the vehicle for part exchange is as the customer states. You must establish:

- The ownership of the vehicle and that there are no restrictions affecting ownership
- Mileage, make, model and vehicle options are as the customer describes

This information can be obtained from a variety of sources, for example service records, manufacturers' records, MOT certificates and vehicle registration documents.

Assess its condition

It is necessary to assess all aspects of a vehicle's condition. You may require technical expertise to help with this. You may also need to refer to other sources of information like manufacturers' data and vehicle inspection records. Of course the vehicle's own documentation will also provide useful data that will aid you in making an accurate assessment.

The vehicle will need to be driven to see if anything obvious can be found mechanically. Whilst inspecting the bodywork, let the engine idle with the bonnet closed, and once the bodywork inspection is completed, then look under the bonnet for signs of overheating and check engine/chassis numbers under there too. Paint imperfections can be spotted easier by kneeling down at each of the four corners and looking down the side of the vehicle. Don't forget the roof, as it is often overlooked!

Ensure you have the right information to determine the value of the vehicle

Useful sources of information that will help to determine a vehicle's value are trade publications such as CAP Black Book or Glasses Guide. Remember these are as they suggest – guides, for vehicles in good condition. They are not to be taken as fixed prices. Hard to find highly desirable cars in mint condition are usually worth more, most are worth less. Even regionally, vehicles can be worth different amounts. Vehicle price lists and repair cost publications are also useful.

In addition you must ensure that features on the vehicle that either add or detract value from the vehicle have been taken into account, including non standard parts. Aftermarket wheels and accessories only add value for a specific type of buyer. This limits your market and can often reduce the value of your car.



You would probably keep them on a sports type of car, but what would you do if they were fitted on an S Class Mercedes saloon?!! One tacky car can ruin a whole site.

Finally remember to ask the trading-in customer what he intends to remove from his vehicle, such as specialist audio/video equipment where fitted. Write these details on the evaluation sheet and ensure that the customer signs it.

You will find the form printed overleaf helpful- you may even wish to use it in your own business.

Exercise A

Time guide: 30 min.

In this exercise, you can practise using the vehicle purchase evaluation form on a vehicle you have available. You may wish to ask a colleague to examine the same vehicle, and compare notes.

This key evaluation form will help to ensure that you have covered all aspects of the vehicle like extra features, dents, scratches, alloy wheels, etc.



CAR PURCHASE EVALUATION FORM

Reg	e.g. XY56ABC	Customer name	e.g. Mr John Smith
Make		Contact no (day)	
Model		Evening	
Year		Mobile	
Colour		email	

No of doors		Saloon		Gears	
Manual		Hatchback		MOT expires	
Auto		Estate		Tax expires	

Full service history	Part	None	Main dealer
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Customer valuation: £ _____

Extras

PAS		Alloys		Full leather	
S/roof		ABS		E/seats	
E/S roof		Cruise		Heated seats	
E/Windows		Radio/CD		Comms point	
C/locking		Heated mirror		Other:	
E/mirrors		Multiplay CD			
Air con		1/2 leather			

Interior condition

Seats _____
 Carpets _____
 Dashboard _____
 Doortrims _____
 Headlining _____

Proposed vehicle

Stock No _____ Make _____ Model _____

Bodywork

Price	
Dealer valuation of P/X	
<i>less remedial work</i>	
Balance	
Price differential	



Finance, warranties and extras

Finance

Whether your dealer has a separate department dealing purely in financing cars, or not, you must develop a good understanding of basic finance and how it can be used to help sell cars.

Very few people have the required amount of money to purchase a car outright, in which case they have alternatives open to them, all relating to finance.

Private finance

They could organise a loan through their bank, building society or finance company. This takes time and effort on their part.

Dealer finance

You must always offer finance through your dealer where you will save the time and effort of your customers. The majority will be thankful, and you could possibly earn finance commission. Another very real benefit is that they are more likely to come back to you for future finance requirements.

The finance companies that you deal with usually give you a rate chart stating the minimum rate you can offer on the age of car you are selling. The newer the car the lower the rate. Most finance companies operate a commission scheme based on the difference in the charges between their base rate and the rate you quote.

The examples below are not indicative of current interest rates, and are used purely for simplification. The formulae will be the same. APR (Annual Percentage Rate) is what the customer looks at for comparison purposes. It is helpful to talk about the actual monthly payment, as this is what the customer looks at in terms of affordability, and considers the “bottom line”. APRs vary slightly from lender to lender, even with the same base rate, so can be misleading.

Example:

Borrow £10,000@ 10% flat rate over 4 years:

$\text{£}10000 \times 10\% \times 4 = \text{£}4000 \text{ charges} + \text{£}10000 = \text{£}14000 \times 1/48 = \text{£}291.66 \text{ monthly payment}$

However, base rate for the age of car in this case is 7%. This works out like this:

$\text{£}10000 \times 7\% \times 4 = \text{£}2800 \text{ charges} + \text{£}10000 = \text{£}12800 \times 1/48 = \text{£}266.66 \text{ monthly payment}$

The difference in charges is £4000 less £2800 = £1200 dealer commission.



Different dealers have different finance commission structures, payable to their sales staff, if you are on a percentage basis, it would be the percentage of the £1200 in this example.

However if the APR (Annual Percentage Rate), which is stated clearly on the finance document, appears too uncompetitive, because you were greedy when quoting, you risk losing the respect you worked so hard to get.

If the customer refuses to sign the finance document, which is his entitlement, you will have to then drop the rate to keep the sale- not the best solution. Find out what the banks/ building societies are offering and compare that to what you can offer. If you are selling new cars, manufacturers all offer much lower rates than can be generally obtained, which means that you must check out the finance deals offered by rival manufacturers.

Make a mental note of how much it is to borrow £1000 at your normal rate, so that you can answer objections over affordability. It is not good to interrupt your flow. Keep a pocket calculator on you at all times.

For example, the prospect is deliberating whether he can afford to borrow £6000 to buy a car he likes. By asking him what monthly budget had been envisaged for a car, you will be able to work out in your head how much they can really spend.

If they really want a car, you have a number of useful options that will help you make the sale, and to overcome the objection "I can't afford it".

Spread the payments over a longer term

- Offer deferred payment (some finance companies offer this "buy now, start paying in 3 or 6 months time")
- Personal lease scheme (with an option to purchase scheme after say 36 months, meaning lower monthly instalments, because only up to 50% of the car is financed for 36 months.

If your standard rate is say 8% for a 2 year old car, work out how much £1000 is to borrow over 4 years: $£1000 \times 8\% \times 4 = £320$ charges $+£1000 = £1320 \times 1/48 = £27.50$ per month. The prospect wants to know if he can afford to borrow £6000 with a monthly budget of £170. You can confirm that he can! ($£27.5 \times 6 = £165$ per month).

Try your own examples.



Exercise B

Time guide: 25 min.

Amount to borrow	Standard rate	Borrowing period	Monthly cost
£ 4,500	9%	3	
£ 7,000	6%	4	
£ 8,000	8%	2	
£12,000	7%	4	

Warranties

Familiarise yourself with each warranty type you have at your disposal to offer. Read each warranty carefully so that you know what's covered, and what is NOT covered. Use an upgraded warranty or extended warranty in your negotiations if need be.

Bargaining with warranties

For example, imagine that there appears to be no more money to come from the prospect and there's still £200 shortfall in the deal. Would the customer be interested in an upgraded/extended warranty if he could have it for £200 instead of £350? Very likely, because he thinks he has saved £150. Supposing that the warranty actually cost £100, you've made an extra £100 over the original deal, but more importantly the customer feels he has had a great deal. These customers usually come back to give you more business in the future.

Extras and add-ons



These can be used in two separate ways. They can be items to swing a deal, based on your knowledge of the customer. Typical extras include a rear spoiler, alloy wheels, or even just overmats and mudflaps. Some companies offer food hampers, champagne, flowers, or a cuddly toy if the car is a gift.



You can also use extras to increase your profit after the deal has been agreed on the car. Extras are a way of making a car individual and most people love a bit of personalisation on their vehicle.

Site and Vehicle Preparation

If the sites you are working from looks inviting, and the cars are presented looking sharp, people are more likely to wander in and browse. Give them a minute to see if they are showing interest in the specific vehicle, or type of vehicle, before introducing yourself and asking questions.

Hot tip! Make sure brighter colours are near the front to catch the eye. Never put all dark vehicles together or all light vehicles together --go light, dark, light, dark, as much as possible. Make the initial eye contact as exciting as you can for the prospective customers, to entice them in. Have a look yourself from the customer's point of view to see if your display is attractive. Rotate the stock at least once a week. Keep the site free of debris and rubbish, such as cigarette ends, sweet wrappers, and scrap paper, so that it looks as well cared for as the cars you are selling.

Handing over the vehicle

Successful handover of the vehicle depends on preparation. You should ensure that the vehicle is as the customer specified, it is ready on time, and all documentation and courtesy material is complete and accurate. Prior to this point, arrangements should have been made for finalising payment, such as production of driving licences; insurance certificates and other proofs necessary for finance; to whom the bank draft should be made payable.

As all the relevant paperwork (invoices etc) has been done, then this should be a smooth process with the customer collecting the vehicle at a pre-arranged time and place. You may need to carry out some final instructions or demonstrations and all documentation should be complete.

At this point if a part exchange is involved then you will need to reappraise it against the original appraisal report.

You should explain to the customer about any follow-up services and support. Finally your sales follow up programme should now be actioned.



Exercise C**Time guide: 20 min.**

Ask one of your colleagues to act as a potential customer and practise your sales techniques. Ask them for feedback, and between you complete the section below. If possible use video equipment to record yourself.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Greeting the customer		
Creating a positive relationship		
Questioning skills		
Matching needs with products		
Negotiating skills		



Take an objective look

Wander around the cars for sale regularly, and notes anything that could put a perspective customer off buying a vehicle. Look out for any vehicle that has not sold for a while, and looks a bit flat or not a sharp and cared for, as it should be. If a perspective customer has been sitting in one vehicle, but bought another, check for any scuffs and dirt that needs to be removed. This is especially relevant for secondhand vehicles. Do a regular appraisal for each car, to make sure it looks its best. By putting in more effort than your competitors, you will sell more vehicles. By regular maintenance, including cleaning, you will present your vehicles in the best possible light to every potential customer.

EXERCISE D

time guide 10 minutes

Lists five other things you could do to make your site more inviting from both passing vehicle and pedestrians traffic:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now prepare an Action Plan to deal with any weaknesses. Repeat the exercise at regular intervals and monitor your progress. Selling is all about getting all the little things right, so continuous monitoring and actions leads to improvement.



My Personal Action Plan

Action/information	What I will do	By when	Checked
--------------------	----------------	---------	---------



Well done – you deserve a break now!



Assessment to Unit 4

When identifying the vehicle status, what must you establish?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How would you counter the objection “I can’t afford it”?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Unit 5 Organisation

Planning and Organising your Personal Work Schedule

There is no doubt about it - vehicle sales people work long hours! Customers do not just buy between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and you need to be around to satisfy their needs. However just because you work long hours, it doesn't mean to say that you don't need to pay careful attention to how you organise yourself.

Exercise A

Time guide: 10 min. to set up

Then record your time as you go along during the two weeks

Firstly we are going to start an exercise which will take a couple of weeks to complete!

You can only begin to organise your time, when you understand how you spend it. Using the form below as a guide, make up a time diary. Divide the working day into 15-minute sections. Keep this by you and write in what you did in each section.

Date:

Activity

0800-0815

0815-0830

0830-0845

0845-0900

1845-1900 etc



At the end of the day, decide how effectively (in terms of your objectives) your time was spent, was it:

V=Valuable

D=Doubtful

U=Useless

At the end of the week , analyse your time under the following headings:

- Prospecting
- Research
- Admin/Paperwork
- Dealing with customers/prospects
- Meetings
- Thinking
- Travelling
- Other (specify)

Do this for a couple of weeks and by the end of the second week you will have a pretty good and accurate understanding of where your time goes. Here are just a few:

At the end of the week , analyse your time under the following headings:

- Prospecting
- Research
- Admin/Paperwork
- Dealing with customers/prospects
- Meetings
- Thinking
- Travelling
- Other (specify)

This understanding may lead you to conclude that you need to manage your time more effectively. If so there are a number of tips and techniques which you may find useful.



Ten Time Management Tips

1. Make sure you have well defined job objectives.
2. Spend more time planning - review your priorities each morning. Know when you are likely to have time spare, and when you can expect to be busy with potential customers.
3. Use your diary to plan your time. Book time out for development tasks - not just appointments.
4. Delegate whole tasks - train others to take the responsibility. Don't keep checking up on them.
5. If internal meetings waste your time, is it really necessary for you to attend? Could you attend just the relevant part? Is a meeting necessary, or would a phone conversation work just as well?
6. Batch your phone calls. Plan what you want to say and make sure you have any relevant information to hand.
7. There are four types of paper: junk, information, action and filing. Learn how to deal with each type efficiently.
8. Analyse which tasks you procrastinate over: Paperwork? Market research? Unfamiliar tasks? Plan a start time (not just a deadline) and break jobs down into smaller tasks.
9. Don't say "yes" to all extra work in the hope that you will look efficient. People will take advantage of your good nature.
10. Accept that you cannot do everything - set realistic goals.

The key thing to remember here is that you must be available when customers and prospective customers want to talk to you, either face to face or over the telephone. There's no point keeping your paperwork up to date if you lose a sale!

That said there is a logic in trying to have times during the week or day when 'things are slack' and you can spend uninterrupted time completing paperwork or making sales calls. Plan this time into your schedule, and let your colleagues know about it so they can cover for you, and leave you in peace.

You will have sales targets and it is important that your schedule allows you every opportunity to meet those targets. You have to plan your working schedule to suit your own working style and methods, but as a minimum build in time for:



- Research
- Prospecting
- Vehicle familiarisation
- Administration
- Face-to-face selling
- Personal development

Forecasting, Monitoring and Evaluating Sales Performance

Setting Objectives

As we explained earlier, all objectives should be 'SMART', that is:

Specific
Measurable
Agreed
Realistic
Timebound

and should be mutually agreed between you and your manager.

Now that you have learnt more about the process of Vehicle Selling, it is time to plan your objectives in more detail.

For example, in order to stimulate interest in your range, what marketing activities are you going to complete this month?

What vehicle familiarisation are you going to complete this month?

What personal development activities are you going to complete this month?

What profit per vehicle do you expect to achieve from each unit?

You can also build in the sales targets you have set earlier, or you can use this to adjust your longer-term objectives.



Exercise B

Time guide: 20 min.

Set yourself SMART objectives for the next month.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The other side of setting objectives is to review them, which you may do with your manager, or simply for your own information. Be sure you look at what you did, what you did not do, and think about the reasons why in both cases. Perhaps your goals were not realistic? Perhaps they were a bit vague? Perhaps there was bad weather or good weather that kept people at home. Whatever the reason, you can improve your performance by regularly checking and adjusting future objectives based on your increasing experience.

Forecasting and Monitoring Sales Objectives

Almost certainly, you will be asked to provide regular sales forecasts - how many vehicles you are projecting to sell over the next period. In providing this information, you should take account of:

- Past (recent) sales performance
- Sales trends
- Market conditions
- Comparison of your products vs. your competitors'

You should also feed in any further sales opportunities you have identified.



Treat the preparation of this information as important and useful, not as a chore. Use it to help plan your activities and how you are going to improve your performance.

Evaluating Sales Performance

Your performance should be regularly reviewed against the objectives you are setting yourself. Take a few minutes to review after each sales meeting. If it was successful, why was it successful, and if not, why not? This will help you identify areas where you can improve your performance.

If possible ask a third party to evaluate your performance - your boss will often give valuable feedback on how well you are doing.

If for some reason you are 'having a bad month', it could be due to factors outside your control. If so, pass on the fact that sales are being lost to whoever is responsible and work with them to improve the situation.

Avoid negative thinking

Successful selling is built on confidence and persistence. While it is important to analyse why we won or lost a sale, we should also not allow ourselves to fall into the pit of superstition.

This can let us believe that we are not successful because:

- It rained
- No business can be done on Monday mornings or Friday afternoons
- There is too much competition
- You cannot do anything with a customer who has said no
- That you are having bad luck
- That you cannot learn from every day, and from your colleagues
- That everyone else has easier targets

This is negative thinking which will reduce your confidence and opportunities for success.

Many successful vehicle sales people have a set of affirmations like those below which help them to stay positive, and stay on target. You can use these, or adapt/make up your own.



My affirmations

I am happy. I am smiling. I enjoy my work.
I like meeting people, and learning about them.
I enjoy finding out what is going to let them buy.
I see every prospect as a customer.
I see every objection as a buying signal.
I want to learn something new every day.
I recognise negative emotions, and will turn them into positive energy.



Well done – you deserve a

break now!



Assessment to Unit 5

1. Write down here what you found out about how you spend your time, as a result of keeping you time diary:

2. What will you do about improving the effectiveness of your time spent?

3. Which of the Ten Time Management Tips did you find most relevant to you?

1. List 5 areas of work which you need to build in time for:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)



2. How will you measure your success?

3. What are my personal affirmations which will keep my confidence high?



Unit 6 Effective working

Be Professional

At all times remember you are a professional, and ensure that your behaviour reflects the highest professional standards. For example:

- Treat your colleagues as you would want to be treated - respond to their requests for help promptly, clearly, accurately and efficiently
- Always respect colleagues' views and opinions - even if they don't reflect yours
- Maintain private information at all times
- Ensure that your manner and appearance are appropriate and acceptable

Contributing to planning

As a salesperson you are ideally placed to act as an information gatherer. You can collect information on:

- Competitors
- Customers
- Market conditions

and pass it on to whoever in your organisation is responsible for planning. It can then be used to prepare recommendations for improving sales plans, activities and performance.



Exercise A

Time guide: 20 min.

Think of the information, which you are in a position to gather, which would be helpful to whoever is compiling the sales plan? Write down where you get it from, how often and who you should pass it to?

Research Plan

What information to	Where from	How often	Pass
----------------------------	-------------------	------------------	-------------

Here are some examples of useful planning information, you may have already listed some of them above.

Competitor information:

- pricing strategy
- special offers/promotions
- advertising strategy

Customer information:

- customer profile information
- feedback from customers on how product/services can be improved

Market conditions:

- regional economic conditions may affect people's propensity to purchase vehicles, e.g. opening/closing of a major employer unstable interest rates may make fixed interest loans attractive

Product information:

- ranges,
- styles,
- extras,
- road reports



- fuel economy reports,
- trade magazine write-ups.

Systems, Procedures and Practices

Maintaining Quality and Customer Service Standards

You should fully understand, and adhere to the systems and procedures for maintaining quality and customer service standards within your organisation. This may include:

- Maintaining and updating sales records
- Ensuring all customer communications conform with standards
- Ensuring customer correspondence is accurate, legible and understandable
- Ensuring any commitments given to customers are monitored to ensure they are carried out within agreed timescales

Complaints

If any customer complaints are received, these should be dealt with according to your organisation's procedures and customer service standards. Complaints must be sympathetically received, and their exact nature tactfully established. You then need fully research the complaint and agree a course of action with the customer. The nature and outcome of all complaints received should be documented in order that they can be analysed for trends in order to implement improvements.

Exercise B

Time guide: 5 min.

Think about the situations you might encounter when a customer complains:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now think about how you would deal with them. It is a good idea to imagine that you are the customer, and think what solution they would like.

Here are some tips on dealing with complaints:



- a) Listen positively and attentively
- b) Express regret quickly you can do this, without admitting liability, by saying, “ I am very sorry you feel that way, Mr. Smith”
- c) Feed the complaint back to the customer, to show that they know that you understand the issue.
- d) Trust the customer- while some are professional complainers, most are genuine, and are telling the truth, as they see it.
- e) Don't pass the buck- accept responsibility. A customer who only has to complain once is more easily placated than one who has had to repeat his complaint several times- increasingly louder!
- f) Try to settle the complaint quickly- it can be a festering wound, and if untended, will grow with time.
- g) Think in terms of problem solving- don't just react to his/her complaint. Consider what would restore the equilibrium.
- h) Thank your customers for complaining, as they can help you improve your service.

It is also worthwhile obtaining a letter from the local Trading Standards Office, which says that they have had no complaints from the public about your business for the past year. Letters of thanks from satisfied customers can be kept in a book and displayed in your waiting area, for further reassurance to potential customers.

Efficient Working Environment

Imagine being in the position of having a customer ready to buy and you 'lose control of the process' because you can't lay your hands on the right piece of paper?

Anything which supports you in your job should be maintained. For example:

- All files kept up to date and easily accessible
- Sales documentation is accessible
- Sales and marketing literature and brochures are available for reference and issue to customers
- Keys and handbooks for vehicles are secure and accessible
- Office area looks tidy, with no overflowing ashtrays, “girlie” calendars, or collection of dirty coffee cups on display



Effective Communications

Although you are a professional communicator, some reminders are always useful:

- Verbal communication should be clear, accurate and at a pace which enables understanding. The tone and manner should be adjusted to the needs of the listener and situation and should be supported, not contradicted by appropriate body language.
- Written communication should be clear, accurate and legible. It should contain the relevant information and made in the appropriate style and format - making use of standard documents and forms wherever necessary.
- You should be able to store and access information easily. Perhaps you use a computer system? If so are you competent in using it? If you use a paper-based system, make sure you can easily lay your hands on what you require.

Exercise C

Time guide: 30 min.

Carry out a **SWOT analysis** for the Sales Organisation element of your organisation.

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, and you should list what you think they are for the Sales part of your organisation.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal, and can include skills on the computer, experience in the motor trade, in-depth product knowledge, or lack of marketing.

Opportunities and threats are external, and should include growing residential/business area, changes in car tax legislation, competitor closing down, large population of 17/18 year olds.

If you need more information about the make-up of the local population, contact your local Council, or Chamber of Commerce.



<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Weaknesses</u>
<u>Opportunities</u>	<u>Threats</u>

Sales Planning

Write a sales plan for your Sales Department. There's no time guide for this part - take as long as you need to complete a thorough plan. Use the exercises you have completed so far to help you.

The plan should cover the following:

1. The sales objectives for the coming year.
2. An action plan describing how the objectives will be met.
3. What resources will be needed to achieve the objectives?
4. How you are going to measure the effectiveness of the plan throughout the year.
5. What you need to know to be more effective.



Sales Plan

Date:

Objectives:

Exercise D

Time guide: 30 min.

Write a corresponding action plan which will help you meet the objectives listed above:

Action

By Whom

By When

Budget



Congratulations - You have completed the Professional Vehicle Selling course

At this point you have gained a valuable insight into successful vehicle selling.

You should understand the key stages of the sales process:

- How to identify and generate selling opportunities
- How to conduct the sales negotiation
- How to appraise and value part exchange vehicles, and
- How to hand over the new vehicle

In addition you should understand how best to organise yourself and your organisation in order to allow successful vehicle selling to flourish:

- Through planning and organising your work schedule
- Through forecasting and evaluating sales performance
- Through effective working and communicating
- Through the use of good practices, procedures and systems
- Through contributing to marketing activities, and
- Through the design and implementation of a sales plan

Please take every opportunity you can to use what you have learned in this course. It will help you and it will help your organisation.

Good luck!



Assessment to Unit 6

Carry out a SWOT analysis on yourself:

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats



How to obtain your certificate

If you have completed this course, please send a copy of:

- a) Your completed Unit Assessments
- b) Your Personal Action Plan

together with your name and address.

To: The Assessment Centre
Top Mark Training
10 Valiant Way
Christchurch
Dorset
BH23 4TW

Our assessors will check the standard of your work and if satisfactory, a Top Mark Training Certificate will be issued.

