



Creating the Sales Plan

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss how to create a sales plan for a business.



Initiate

The first stage of the cycling is finding new opportunities and establishing relationships that focus on identifying and solving client needs. These relationships can evolve in many ways.

The easiest sales are with customers that you already know or have already bought from you. In order to keep your pipeline full, however, it's important to attract a variety of customers from different industries or types of businesses. That way, if there is an economic slowdown, a business shutdown, or a natural disaster, your potential to sell is not so strongly affected.

These days, it is common for salespeople to get involved in a **range of networking activities** that may not seem directly related to one particular sale, but they are a help in getting established within a network or community.

Test Your Knowledge

What kinds of activities, networking, or connecting are you doing?

How do these activities support your plans for sales and growth in your business?

Many top salespeople learned a tremendous amount about sales by **cold calling**, and there are lots of salespeople who make all of their sales strictly over the phone. Phone sales often mean that the salesperson is taking incoming calls from inquiring clients. This means that they do not have to find clients, but they do have to qualify those clients within a phone call.

Build

This is where you convert opportunities into clients by building trust and credibility.

Once you meet your client, you begin building your relationship with them. These relationships are based on trust. As you build the relationship, you will investigate your potential client’s problems, get a solid understanding of their situation, pre-qualify them as a buyer, and consider how you will make your presentation to them in a dynamic way. Remember that your presentation has to appeal to them from their point of view, and that customer focused selling is a consultative process.

List some optimal ways to build these relationships.

Manage

The next stage is managing the relationship and focusing on serving your customers by offering solutions, resolving problems, meeting their needs, and getting their agreement to buy.

In this part of the sales cycle, you will make your presentation, considering all aspect of your client's needs and the benefits of your solution. You will also ask them to make a buying decision and work through any objections that they have.

Another thing that a sales professional must work with is what makes their company, product, and/or service unique. This is called your **Unique Selling Point** (or Position) – the USP for short. Make sure that you can answer your prospects when they ask why you are in the best position to provide this solution.

Our customers are experiencing information overload much of the time, so the amount of attention that they will give you is limited. If you send them a **written proposal**, expect that they will scan it very quickly. This means that your headings and text need to be short and to the point. During an **in person or telephone presentation**, watch and listen for cues that you have their attention and are answering their questions. Adjust your approach as necessary to keep them engaged.

Optimize

In the last phase of the cycle, we grow the relationship with consistent results and problem solving. This is the time to set up long term relationships through additional problem solving, business building, and referrals.

This is also the aspect of the sales cycle that you will use to help top up your pipeline. Even if your prospect says “no,” that does not mean that they will never do business with you, or that they don't trust you. Sometimes it means that they need more time to consider your offer, or that there is some very real barrier they have to deal with. Instead of thinking that “no” is the end of your relationship, you can continue to build the relationship. For example, you can ask the client for referrals.

The other aspect to consider at this stage of the sales cycle is whether there are other opportunities to work with the same organization. Can you build on the relationship that you have developed and help other departments, locations, and people within the same company? If you have not been introduced to those opportunities through the sales cycle, ask.

The final phase of optimizing is to evaluate what you have done throughout this sale. What have you learned? What can you do better or differently next time in order to reach a more successful result?

Further Reading: