

SELL⁵

TRUST-BASED PROFESSIONAL SELLING



9

Expanding Customer Relationships

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1 Explain how to follow-up to assess customer satisfaction
- 2 Explain how to harness technology to enhance follow-up and buyer-seller relationships
- 3 Discuss how to take action to ensure customer satisfaction
- 4 Discuss how to expand collaborative involvement
- 5 Explain how to add value and enhance mutual opportunities

WAYS TO ENHANCE CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

- 5 minute partner exercise
 - Get with your neighbor and list as many ways as possible to build customer relationships.
 - Don't forget rational ways as well as emotional ways



5 WAYS TO BUILD KILLER CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

1. Communicate.

- Promoting your business and listening to your customers are equally important.
- Rather than just telling customers about your business, have conversations with them. Find out what your customers need, then show them that you have a solution to their problem.
- If you have employees, teach them how to effectively communicate with customers. Maintain an employee policy, requiring timely follow-up, to make sure the customer's needs are met. Make sure your staff returns voicemail messages and emails promptly.

2. Exceed expectations.

- Your customers expect great products or services from you. You should continue to raise the bar on what your company offers.
- To put it simply, under promise, and over deliver. When you impress customers, they keep coming back.
- To exceed customer expectations, you can deliver a product or service faster than anticipated. When you deliver earlier than expected, the customer will be happy about the surprise. For example, tell a customer their order will be ready by the end of the month, knowing you will have it ready a week earlier.

3. Ask for feedback.

- Whether customers have a good or bad opinion about your business, they will make their feelings known. Invite customer feedback to show you are listening. Place comment cards on your business counter, or conduct a survey.
- Customer feedback helps you hone your customers' specific needs so you can find the best solutions to their problems. The better your offering meets their needs, the more your business will grow.
- Always listen carefully to comments and respond promptly, whether it's a compliment or a complaint. The worst thing you can do is ask for feedback then not address concerns. Even negative feedback is valuable and can give you an honest gauge of customer satisfaction.

4. Connect.

- With technology, there are more ways to begin conversations with your customers than ever before. There are many online tools and social media outlets you can use to reach customers.
- When you engage with customers online, be careful not to create a one-way conversation. Ask customers questions, and respond to their inquiries.
- Also, make sure your website is top-notch, and start a blog to engage your customers and prospects. Build customer relationships through your online presence.

5. Show appreciation.

- Reward long-time customers with a loyalty discount program. You can hand out reward cards, or use a loyalty program app to track customer rewards.
- With a loyalty program, customers earn points for buying your goods or services. After earning a certain number of points, the customer gets a reward. For example, you could reward a customer with a discount on their next purchase.

WAYS TO ESTABLISH CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

- **Build goodwill:** Convert new customers into lifetime customers by continually **adding value** to the product
- Handle complaints in a timely and thoughtful manner
- Process requests for rush deliveries willingly
 - Assure the customer that the salesperson will do everything possible to make that request happen



Enhancers	Detractors
Focus on long term	Focus on short term
Deliver more than salesperson promises	Overpromise—underdeliver
Call regularly	Call sporadically
Add value	Show up only for another order
Keep communication lines open	Be unavailable to the customer
Take responsibility for problems	Lie, exaggerate, or blame someone else

RELATIONSHIP ENHANCERS AND DETRACTORS

BUILDING GOOD WILL

The process of converting new customers into lifetime customers by continually adding value to the product.



BUILDING BUYER-SELLER RELATIONSHIPS

- Consumers form relationships to:
 - Reduce choices
 - Simplify information gathering and the entire buying process
 - Reduce the risk of dissatisfaction
 - Perceived positive value received in a long-term buyer-seller relationships is a key benefit for customers
 - Customers may switch loyalties if they perceive better benefits from a competitor

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

- How can a salesperson convert new customers into highly committed customers for life?
- Customers become committed for life only after the salesperson has proven himself or herself to the customer over a period of time.
- This entails building goodwill by continually creating and delivering value, resolving complaints, and processing special requests as needed (and where appropriate).
- In other words, the salesperson should add value and never let the customer down during one of the many “moments of truth.”
- Ensures customer trust
- Salespeople should:
 - Perform post-sale follow-up activities
 - Anticipate and adapt to changes in situations
 - Regularly provide product information
 - Gather customer satisfaction information through surveys, feedbacks, and social media

7 SIMPLE WAYS TO KEEP IN TOUCH

01

Set up an alert on each customer.

- Plenty of tools help you keep track of customers (or competitors). Google Alerts is one, Talkwalker another.
- Pick a tool and set up an alert on the person's name, company name, her industry, maybe topics of personal interest ... and then you can reconnect with something to offer: congratulations, information about new competitors, trends in the industry, etc.
- The key is to turn a generic "Thinking of you" into a much more meaningful, "I immediately thought of you when I saw this."

02

Offer to recommend.

- Many people feel uncomfortable asking others to complete LinkedIn Recommendations. Instead of waiting for a customer to ask, jump in and write one. You will not only strengthen a connection but also get the chance to (subtly) describe your business and services when you discuss how you and your customer did business in the past.
- Or go further. Be a matchmaker and recommend a customer's services to another customer. If you pick the right people, both will be grateful for the introduction.
- Never forget: People tend to like, and remember, the people who like them.

03

Show some PR love.

- Profile a customer. Better yet, ask customers to share tips, advice, and strategies. You get content, you both get a content marketing boost, and they feel good about the fact that you respect them enough to feature them on your blog, video ... whatever media you use to market your business.

7 SIMPLE WAYS TO KEEP IN TOUCH

4

Do something nice

- Building customer relationships isn't totally altruistic; you eventually want something (like more sales). But when you're staying in touch, forget about what you want and focus on what you can provide.
- If you're creative, the list of things you can give--tangible and intangible--is endless.
- Giving is the only way to establish a real connection and relationship. Focus solely on what you can get out of it and you will never build a long-term relationship.

5

Ask for meaningful--not gratuitous--input.

- While a, "How can we improve our products or services?" inquiry is fine, go a step further and ask customers to share their knowledge or expertise. Ask if they'll be beta testers. Ask if they will try a product or service for free in exchange for recommendations for improvement.
- Or call and say, "We're really trying to do a better job at (something specific you do). Can I take you to lunch and get your advice?"

6

Comment.

- Lots of people write blog posts and articles. Few receive any comments on their posts (which can be pretty disheartening).
- Subscribe to your customer blogs, use alerts to find articles they write for other sites (or articles they're quoted in), and leave thoughtful comments. Your customers will greatly appreciate the support.

7

Keep helpful notes.

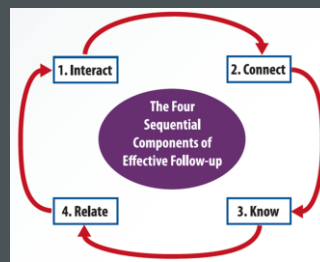
- So keep an informal database. Or add notes to your contact. Do whatever works for you. Then, before you call or email, quickly scan your notes so you're up to speed. And occasionally review your notes; you never know when someone will call unexpectedly.
- Put in the effort; it's worth it. Memories come and go, but electronic data is forever--and that's how long you want your customer relationships to ask.

WHY SHOULD A SALESPERSON FOLLOW UP TO ASSESS CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

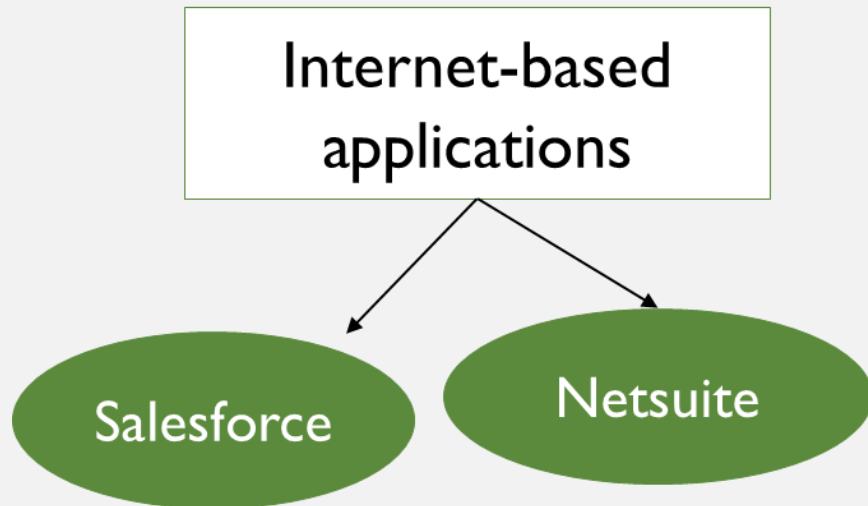
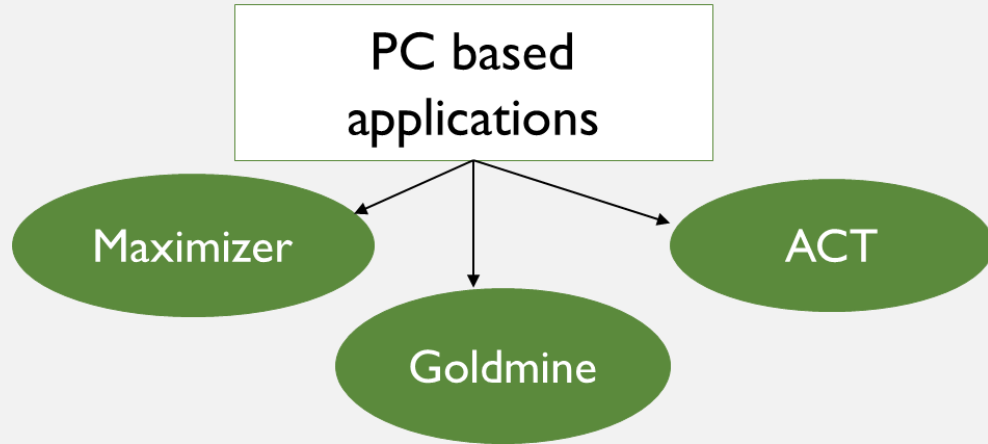
- ✓ Salespeople should follow up to assess customer satisfaction to ensure the customer's expectations have been met and.
- ✓ This can help salespeople build trust.
- ✓ Most customers will not complain when they experience dissatisfaction (unless the dissatisfaction is great) or when their expectations have not been met.
- ✓ They will, however, often express their dissatisfaction to others (negative word-of-mouth) and question whether they want to continue doing business with the salesperson and the salesperson's organization.
- ✓ If salespeople do not follow up, they will never know that their customers are dissatisfied and consequently will never have a chance to correct the problem.



THE FOUR SEQUENTIAL COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP



- Interact
 - The salesperson acts to maximize the number of critical encounters with buyers in order to encourage effective dialogue and involvement between the salesperson and the buyer
- Connect
 - The salesperson maintains contact with the multiple individuals in the buying organization influencing purchase decisions and manages the various touch points the customer has in the selling organization to ensure consistency in communication
- Know
 - The salesperson coordinates and interprets the information gathered through buyer-seller contact and collaboration to develop insight regarding the buyer's changing situation, needs, and expectations
- Relate
 - The salesperson applies relevant understanding and insight to create value-added interactions and generate relationships between the salesperson and buyer

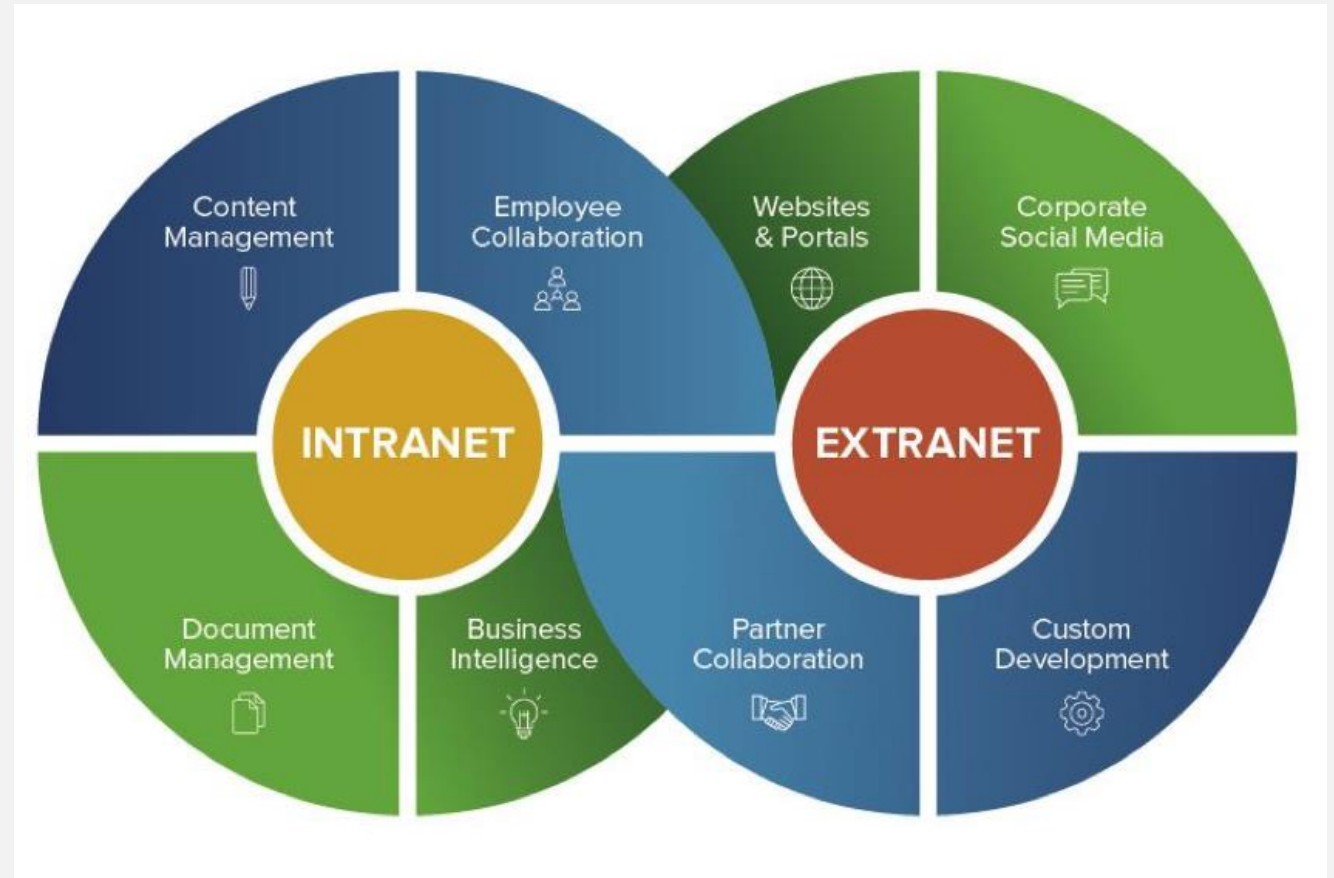


TECHNOLOGY-BASED SALESFORCE AUTOMATION TOOLS

- Use by salespeople to better track the increasingly complex combination of buyer-seller interactions
- To manage the exchange, interpretation and storage of diverse types of information
 - PC software applications and Internet applications collect, file and access comprehensive databases detailing formation about individual buyers and buying organizations
- Invaluable in helping track and improve service to accounts, ensuring and enhancing customer satisfaction.
 - By understanding every transaction and buyer-seller interaction, salespeople can be more effective in communicating throughout the lifetime of the account

HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE FOLLOW-UP AND BUYER-SELLER RELATIONSHIPS

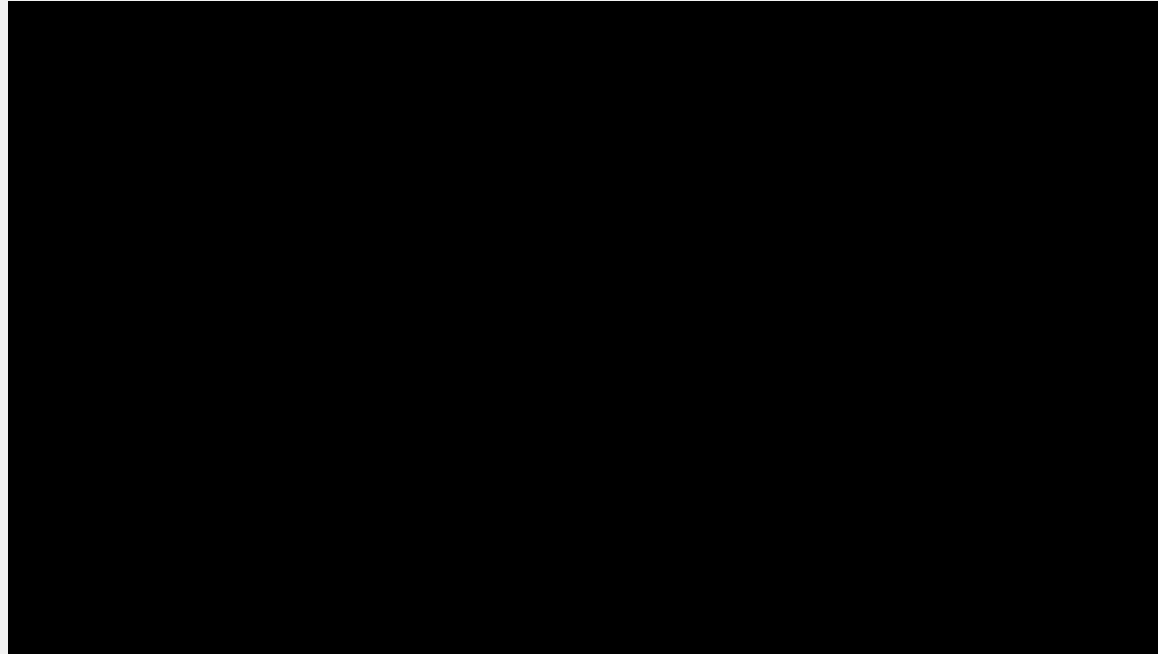
- Customer contact management tools are used in multiorganization intranets and extranets
 - **Intranet:** Organization's computer network that offers password-controlled access to people within and outside
 - **Extranet:** Computer network created by an organization for use by its customers or suppliers
 - Linked to the organization's internal systems, informational databases, and intranet



- **Customer relationship management systems (CRM)**
 - Links buyers and sellers into a rich communication network
 - Establishes and reinforces long-term, profitable relationships
 - Salespeople and buyers have immediate 24/7 access to one another and one another's organizations
 - Salespeople can use the web to view anything relevant to any account
 - Purchase history, credit rating, number of employees, news stories, stock prices)
 - Enable salespeople to build and integrate multiple forms of customer information and create highly influential customer interactions that establish and reinforce long term, profitable relationships

CRM SYSTEMS

WHAT IS CRM – CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT



SALESFORCE.COM



ENSURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Remembering the customer after the sale

Expediting orders and monitoring installation

Training customer personnel

Correcting billing (any) errors

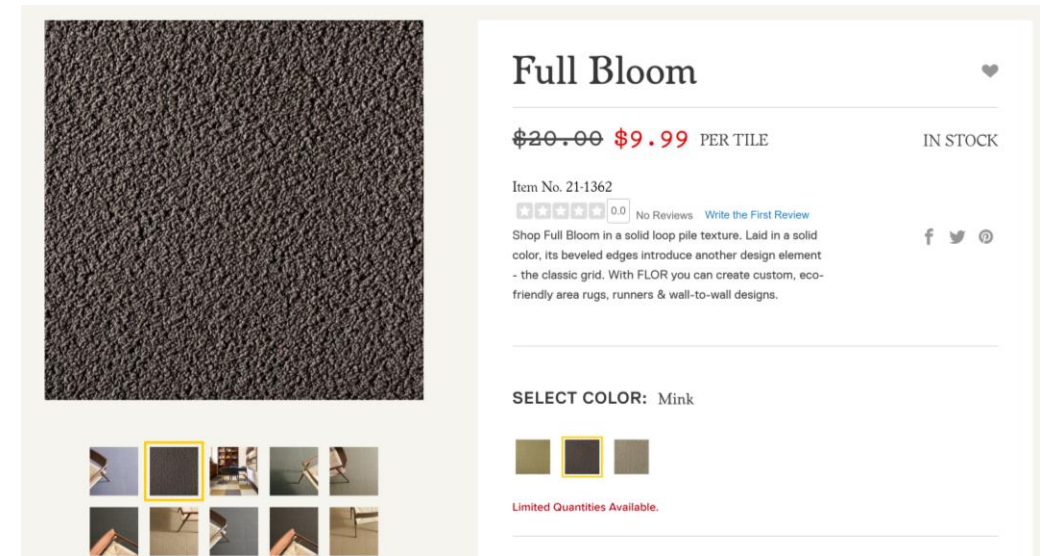
Resolving complaints

Partnership-Enhancement Activities	Salesperson Responsibility
Provide useful information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant• Timely• High quality
Expedite orders/monitor installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track orders• Inform on delays• Help with installation
Train customer personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train even when contract does not call for it
Correct billing errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go over all orders• Correct problem before customer recognizes it
Remember the customer after the sale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set up a regular call schedule• Let customer know you will be back
Resolve complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preferably prevent the need to complain• Ask customer how he or she wants complaint resolved

TYPICAL COMPLAINTS

- Late delivery
- Damaged merchandise
- Invoice errors
- Out of stock- back orders
- Shipped incorrect product
- Shipped incorrect order size
- Service department unresponsive
- Product does not live up to expectations
- Customer not informed of new developments
- Customer problems not taken seriously
- Improper installation
- Need more training
- Price increase- no notice
- Cannot find the salesperson when needed
- Unreturned phone calls
- *(what else?)*
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-
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1. Build relationship to the point that the customer is comfortable complaining.
2. Listen carefully and get the whole story.
3. Ask the customer what he or she would like you to do.
4. Gain agreement on a solution. Tell the customer what you can do; do not focus on what you cannot do.
5. Take action; educate the customer so he or she has realistic expectations.
6. Follow through on all promises. Add value.



Maureen at Flor Tile – excellent example of handling my complaint

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS

COLLABORATIVE INVOLVEMENT



A salesperson's goal is to work with customers who have entered into a strategic alliance with the salesperson's firm



Done by building trust over a long period of time



The salesperson should always look for ways to improve the relationship and create a stronger bond



Process in which the buyer's organization and the salesperson's organization combine to improve an offering

Customers can provide insight on how products can be improved

Companies can hold training sessions, seminars, and social engagement workshops for its customers

ADDING VALUE AND ENHANCING MUTUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CUSTOMER

Provide quality customer service

Meet customer expectations

Develop a service strategy

Concentrate on the dimensions of customer service

1. Warmth and friendliness
2. Reliability
3. Helpfulness/assistance
4. Speed or promptness
5. Assurance
6. Accuracy
7. Follow-through (as promised)
8. Empathy
9. Resolution of complaints, mistakes, or defects
10. Tangibles

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS OF
SALESPEOPLE

CUSTOMER SERVICE DIMENSIONS

Communication

Two-way flow of information between salesperson and customer

Service motivation

Desire of a salesperson to serve customers each day

Customer Service Dimensions

Resilience

Salesperson's ability to withstand customer's verbal assault and get right back up with a smile and ask for more

IN CLASS EXERCISE

- To build mutually satisfying relationships between buyers and sellers, professional salespeople must be competent in accomplishing five ongoing tasks: 1) providing information, 2) reducing risk, 3) establishing high standards and expectations, 4) anticipating and responding to customer problems and concerns, and 5) monitoring and improving customer satisfaction.
- For each of these, explain what it means and why it is important to building a relationship.

WHAT IF CUSTOMERS BECOME BEST FRIENDS?

