

Unit 1:

Talking With Your Customer

What are your goals?

Note to Instructor: If you have permission, use Stand Out 4, pp. 4-5 for this activity.

My Goals and Dreams

Part A. Instructions: Write your own personal and employment goals.

Example: I will become an architect and become a partner in a firm.
I will buy a house for my family.

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Goal 4: _____

Goal 5: _____

Part B. Instructions: Now, write about some of your dreams.

Example: I would like to design and build my own home.
I would like to have three children someday.

Dream 1: _____

Dream 2: _____

Dream 3: _____

Dream 4: _____

Find Someone Who....

Part A. Instructions: Walk around the room and ask questions of your classmates to find out if they meet the descriptions below. When you find someone who answers, “Yes, I would” to your question, write that person’s name in the blank.

Example: Find someone who...
would like an evening work shift.

Q: “Would you like an evening work shift?”

A: “Yes, I would.” or “No, I wouldn’t.”

Find someone who...

1. would like to buy a house _____
2. would like to move to another country _____
3. would like to be a sales associate at Macy’s _____
4. would like to work an early morning shift _____
5. would like to work as a bank teller _____
6. would like to speak more clearly _____
7. would like to get a college degree _____
8. would like to write a book _____
9. would like to leave class early today _____
10. would like to manage a Starbucks _____

Part B. Instructions: Choose one thing from the list above that you **would like** to do, and one thing that you **wouldn’t like** to do. Write your statements and reasons on the lines below.

Example: I would like to manage a Starbucks because I love coffee!
I wouldn’t like to buy a house because it is too expensive here.

Greeting the Customer 1

Instructions: Listen to the tape. You will hear a sales associate greeting the customer. Is the greeting appropriate or inappropriate? If it is inappropriate, write why you think so.

	Appropriate or Inappropriate?	Why?
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Greeting the Customer 2

1. Hi. What do *you* _____?
2. Good _____ ma'am. How can I help you _____?
3. Hi – Can I help you _____?
4. _____, sir. _____ I help you?
5. Good morning. Can I help you? We have some very nice shirts on sale today. I think this red color would really suit you. I'm guessing you take a medium? And some pants to match? Wait. Wait. Don't go away!
6. Hi, _____?

Syllables and Stress: Assessment

Instructions: Fill in the blanks according to your teacher's instructions.

	Word	Number of Syllables
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Speaking Clearly

Instructions: Take turns reading the sentences below with your partner. Try to clearly pronounce the ends of the words. Also, pay attention to the syllables and stress in the sentences, pronouncing the *schwa* sound when necessary.

She wants to buy a yellow dress.

He is looking for some sports socks.

She wants to buy a gift for her mother.

Miss Parker would like a large coffee.

We are sold out of size 11.

I want to buy a flat screen T.V.

Greeting the Customer Role Play Peer Evaluation

Instructions: Read the following lists of appropriate behavior for the Sales Associate in the Greeting the Customer role play. Then, watch your classmates perform the role play. Use the lists to guide your comments and suggestions. You **do not need to write** your comments.

Sales Associate	
<p><i>It is appropriate to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smile Be polite and friendly Be professional Speak clearly Greet the customer promptly Make eye contact Acknowledge everybody in the shopping party Other? _____ 	<p><i>It is inappropriate to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand too close to the customer Touch the customer Speak unclearly, too fast, or too quietly Be pushy Chew gum, eat, or drink Say things that are too personal, casual, or rude Other? _____
<p>What did the sales associate do well?</p> <p>What could the sales associate improve?</p> <p>What did the customer do well?</p> <p>What could the customer improve?</p>	

Determine a Customer's Needs

Part A - Instructions: *Read the article below. Do not use a dictionary the first time you read it. Try to use the context to discover the meanings of new words.*

When a person walks into a store, she enters with a desire – conscious or subconscious – to purchase what that store is selling. Shoppers want to buy. Your job as a sales associate is to ensure that customers' needs are satisfied – to help them complete the buying process. Once you've established a friendly connection with a customer, your next challenge is to determine exactly what the customer needs – both goods and services. Many customers know exactly what they want. Others may have only a general idea. Some have nothing specific in mind, only the hope of finding something that will satisfy their desire to buy. The ultimate goal for you is the same for all these cases: to satisfy the customer.

Even if you are assisting a shopper who has already found exactly what he was looking for, you can make a positive impression by taking care of unspoken needs. For example, you can ring up the sale promptly. You may also be able to provide product care advice, a product booklet, directions to the next department the customer is looking for, etc. But mostly, these customers will appreciate immediate attention and efficient service.

You can become skillful at anticipating customer needs by gathering information about the customer in two ways: first, through careful observation; and second, by asking thoughtful questions.

Knowing the questions to ask...

Customers may tell you what they want, but they will not always tell you why. If you ask the right questions, you can find out their buying motive, and thus improve your chances of satisfying customers and making sales. Ask searching questions to determine what the customer likes and needs. Then use your imagination. The customer searching for a baby gift may not know what types of gifts are appropriate. You can ask questions about the baby – age, whether it's a boy or girl – and then make helpful suggestions about clothing, nursery furnishings, books, or toys.

The customer looking for a DVD player may be attracted by such features as ease of use or low price. Help the customer decide by helping him narrow his focus. Most importantly, ask question that encourage conversation. Questions beginning with who, what, where, when, how, and why will open doors. Yes/no questions might close them.

Questions that open doors...

Who are you shopping for?
Who told you about our store?
What brings you into the store today?
What is the special occasion?
Where have you seen one before?

Where will it be used?
When is the special occasion?
When did you decide you wanted one?
How did you hear about us?
Why do you like that specific brand?

Name _____

Determine a Customer's Needs

Part B - Instructions: Using ***your own words***, answer these questions about the article on the previous page.

1. According to the article (first paragraph), what is the sales associate's most important goal?

2. In the second paragraph, underline the words *positive impression*. What do you think it means to make a positive impression?

3. How can you make a positive impression on the customer? What are examples?

4. In the third paragraph, underline the word *anticipating*. What do you think it means to anticipate a customer's needs?

5. According to the article, what are two ways to get information about customer needs?

6. In the fourth paragraph, underline the words *buying motive*. What is another way to say *buying motive* in English? What does it mean?

7. What are the best kinds of questions to use to determine a customer's needs? Why are these questions so useful?

Writing Practice: On the back of this paper, write a one-paragraph summary of the article that you read.

What are his interests?

Part A. Instructions: Listen to the tape. Answer the questions. You do not need to write complete sentences.

1. The customer is buying a gift. Who is it for?

2. What is the special occasion?

3. How old is he?

4. What are his interests?

Part B. Instructions: Listen to the tape again. The sales associate asks four questions before she suggests a product to the customer. Write the questions that you hear.

1. Good morning, _____?

2. Oh, okay. Are you _____?

3. I see. _____?

4. And what are his _____?

Find Someone Who...

Instructions: Walk around the room and ask questions of your classmates to find out if they meet the descriptions below. When you find someone who answers “Yes” to your question, write that person’s name in the blank. Be careful to form your questions correctly!

Example: Find someone who...
...prefers to work during the evening.

Question: *Do you prefer to work during the evening?*

Find someone who...

1. grocery-shops on Sunday night. _____
2. has lived in the U.S. for fewer than two years. _____
3. buys wholesale items sometimes. _____
4. has worked as a sales associate before. _____
5. has had his/her own business in the past. _____
6. works part-time now. _____
7. eats breakfast every day. _____
8. wants to work in a bank. _____
9. knows how to type. _____
10. has already written a resume. _____
11. uses e-mail at least once a week. _____

Be Observant

Instructions: Read the article below. Do not use a dictionary the first time you read it. Try to use the context to discover the meanings of new words.

Getting to know a customer begins with your first encounter. How customers respond to your greeting may tell you if they are in a hurry, have a specific need, or have other priorities. You can learn a lot about a customer by being observant. That is, by simply watching for a moment. If he walks directly to a certain item without looking at other things along the way, this customer probably knows exactly what he wants and would appreciate quick, efficient service. If, on the other hand, a customer seems to be browsing happily, your best approach will be to greet him, offer to serve him as soon as he is ready, and give him some space to browse.

Other clues include:

- **Constantly checks price tags.** You might want to make sure this customer is aware of any specials your store is having by mentioning, “All frames are 25 percent off this week.”
- **Scanning the area, looking above the merchandise rather than directly at it.** You should check if the person needs directions by saying, “You seem to be looking for something – or someone – can I help you with directions?”
- **Looking around for the store clock.** You might say “If you are in a hurry, I’d be happy to help you find something.”
- **Difficulty deciding between similar items.** You can ask questions that will help you understand why the customer can’t decide; then offer additional information that would be helpful such as “We have matching accessories for that line of towels but not the other.”
- **Focusing on specific items.** Engage the customer in conversation that will help you learn more about his interest in that item. You can ask open-ended questions to get more information.

You Be the Detective

Instructions: Before you simply ask, “Can I help you?” observe customers’ actions for clues to their needs and desires. Read the following clues and then pick a response from the box below that might help you get more than, “No, I’m just looking,” from the customer. Write the letter for the response next to the customer clue.

Customer Clue

1. The customer is picking up every object in a display. He is comparing the items to each other. _____
2. A man is browsing and picking up items that are probably for a woman. _____
3. The customer walks to one display, looks at it briefly, and then begins to leave the store. _____
4. The customer keeps picking up and then putting down the same item. She seems unable to make a decision. _____
5. The customer walks in with a shopping bag from your store, walks to a display and begins looking for something. _____
6. The customer gets a shopping cart, pulls out a shopping list and begins going up and down each aisle slowly. _____

Sales Associate Responses

- A. “I’m sorry you didn’t find what you were looking for...perhaps I can help?”
- B. “We just got those in – aren’t they lovely?”
- C. “Can I help you with a return or exchange?”
- D. “Looks like you are considering a gift – is there a special occasion?”
- E. “Let me know if you need help finding anything.”
- F. “You seem undecided...have you used that product before?”

What do you prefer?

1.

Customer:	I don't like this dress. It makes me look to old.
Sales Associate:	What _____ of dress do you prefer?

2.

Customer:	This coat doesn't suit me. I hate green.
Sales Associate:	What _____ are you looking for?

3.

Customer:	These T-shirts are no good for my sons – they will get stained very easily!
Sales Associate:	What _____ do you like?

4.

Customer:	I don't think this washing machine is big enough for my family.
Sales Associate:	What _____ washing machine are you looking for?

5.

Customer:	I need to order some ice cream for my party, but I don't like chocolate.
Sales Associate:	What _____ do you prefer?

style	material	size
color	flavor	

Open-Ended Questions Grid

What kind of ____X____ What style of ____X____	do you like? do you prefer? are you looking for? appeals to you?
What color ____X____ What size ____X____	
What fabric What material	

Opening Doors with Open-Ended Questions

Instructions: Compare the examples of dead-end and open-ended questions. Then, turn the last few examples of dead-end questions into open-ended questions.

DEAD-END	OPEN-ENDED
Can I help you?	How can I help you?
Do you like red or green?	What color do you prefer?
Is that the brand you want?	Why do you prefer that brand?
Is this for you, or is it a gift?	For whom are you shopping?
Did you want a full skirt?	Which style skirt do you like?
Do you want a remote control?	What features are important to you?
Is it for a special occasion?	What's the special occasion?
Looking for anything special?	What are you looking for?
Did you see our coupon specials?	
Do you like 100 percent cotton?	
Have you read this author before?	
Is this all for you today?	

Practice with Open-Ended Questions

Instructions: You are the sales associate. Write the open-ended question you might ask the customer in each scenario, below. Remember to begin the question with *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *which*, or *how*.

1. You see a woman looking at a display of toys and games, trying to decide which toy to buy. You are thinking that she probably has a particular child in mind.

2. You work in a bakery and see that a customer is considering which cake to buy. You would like to know more about what he has planned so that you can recommend the best cake for that occasion.

3. You work in an electronics store and a customer is looking for a particular device for her computer, but she is not sure what it is called.

4. You work in a restaurant, taking carry-out and catering orders by phone. You are speaking to a customer on the phone who is having trouble deciding how many sandwiches he should order for his office party. It would help if you knew the number of people who will be at the party.

5. You work in a clothing store. A teenagers comes into shop for a pair of blue jeans. You have many different brands of blue jeans, but you don't have the particular brand that he wants.

Observing the Customer: Role Plays

1. You work in a department store. A customer comes in and you observe her looking around. She doesn't seem to be able to find what she is looking for. Help her with her shopping.

(The customer is looking for glasses for the kitchen.)

2. You work in a women's clothing store. A woman comes in fast and begins to look around quickly. Help her to find what she wants.

(The customer is looking for a hat.)

3. You work in a grocery store. A customer comes in and looks like he needs help.

(He wants to buy some vegetables for a salad.)

Observing the Customer Role Play Peer Evaluation

Instructions: Read the following lists of appropriate behavior for the Sales Associate in the Observing the Customer role play. Then, watch your classmates perform the role play. Use the lists to guide your comments and suggestions. You **do not need to write** your comments.

Sales Associate	
<p><i>It is appropriate to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smile Be polite and friendly Be professional Speak clearly Greet the customer promptly Make eye contact Observe the customer's behavior in order to choose the most appropriate questions. Use open-ended questions to find out more information. <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>	<p><i>It is inappropriate to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand too close to the customer Touch the customer Speak unclearly, too fast, or too quietly Be pushy Chew gum, eat, or drink Say things that are too personal, casual, or rude Use too many dead-end questions. <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: 0;"/>
<p>What did the sales associate do well?</p> <p>What could the sales associate improve?</p> <p>What did the customer do well?</p> <p>What could the customer improve?</p>	

Mystery Shopper 1

Instructions: Go to any retail store. Observe the sales associate interacting with a customer OR pretend that you are a customer in the store, and talk to the sales associate. Pay attention to how the sales associate greets the customer and what questions he or she asks. Also, pay attention to the overall “customer service attitude” of the sales associate. Afterwards, write about your experience below.

Name: _____

Store: _____

Date: _____

How did the sales associate greet the customer?

Describe the sales associate’s “customer service attitude”.

What questions did the sales associate ask?

What did the sales associate do well? What could he or she improve?

What would you do differently when you are a sales associate?