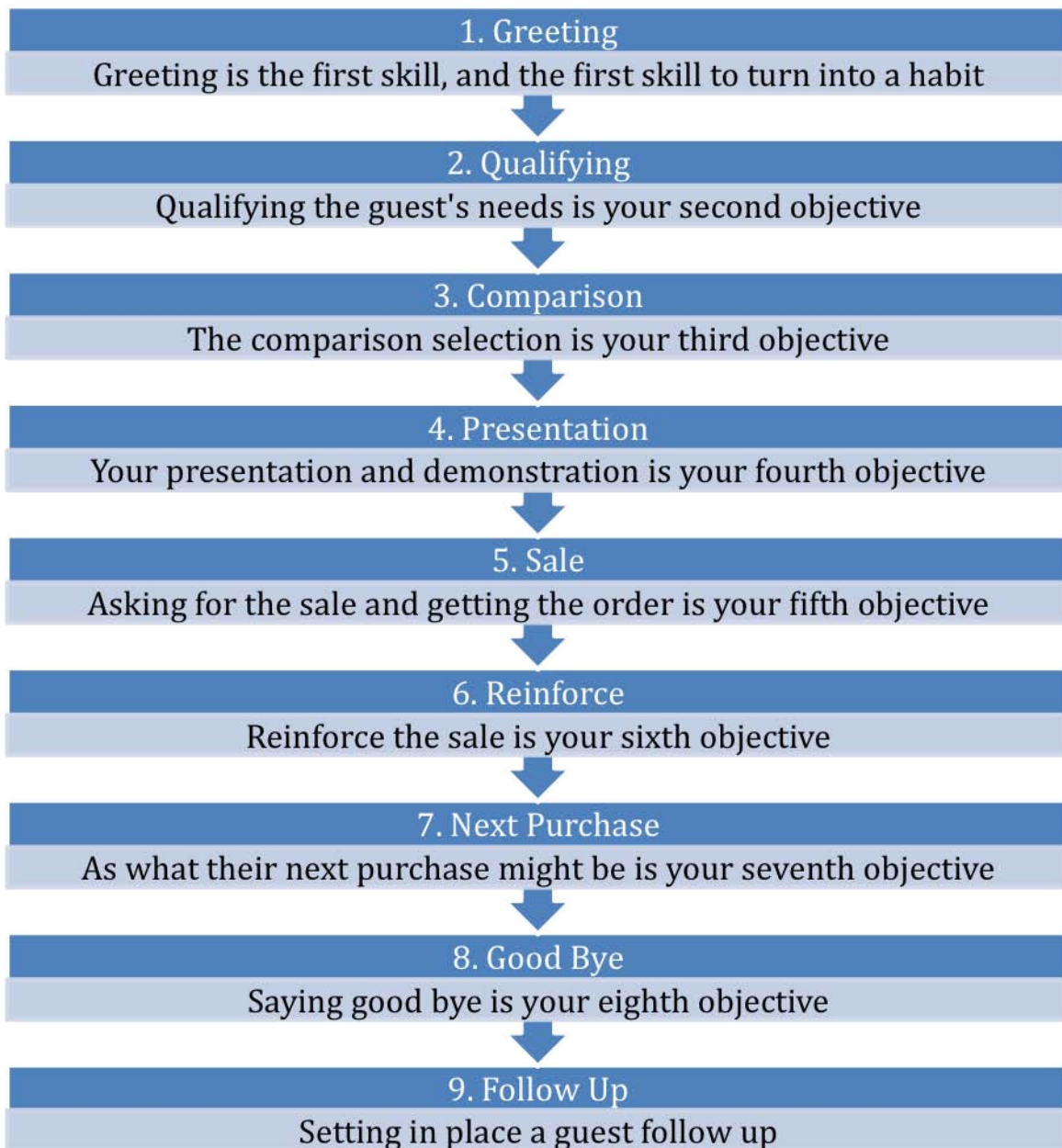


# Nine Essential Steps in Selling

There are nine essential steps in selling. By ensuring you cover each step, you will be more likely to secure your sale and have a satisfied guest.



## 1. **EFFECTIVE GREETING**

The greeting is the first essential skill needed by a salesperson to succeed. Those who perfect this wonderful skill come to love what they do. Those

who don't perfect this skill into a good productive habit find selling a difficult career.

Most of us don't realize but within the first 20 seconds of non-verbal contact with the guest we have already set the tone. Positive breeds positive and negative breeds negative. Make sure you are mentally prepared to greet the guest in a positive attitude. If you are frustrated or upset you will transfer that to the guest. It is very important to learn how to set aside your negative emotions and replace them with positive ones. Your body language will communicate to the guest which emotion you are feeling. Most guests have enough doom and gloom in their lives and they want to encounter a positive sales person with a radiant smile.

Experts believe that something happens at that instant the guest and salesperson come in contact with each other. This first contact can give the salesperson a better than 80% chance of making a sale or better than 80% chance that no sale will be made. We have all heard the saying she has a million dollar smile. Nothing is further from the truth. I have found a great way to practice your million dollar smile. When you visit your local mall, put the biggest smile on your face and keep your head up and acknowledge and the people walking by. You will get a smile back or you may get a hello, sometimes you may get a response like "how are you today?". These are very positive responses to your million dollar smile. Practice makes perfect and the more you practice the better you get. You will have developed a skill that will become a good habit.

### ***Positioning***

Allow the guest to enter the store and position yourself so that the guest is walking towards you not you walking towards the guest. This will allow the guest to feel a lot more comfortable and relaxed. If you take some time to study the traffic flow from the entrance(s). You can then plan the best locations to stand to greet your guests.

If on occasions you find yourself unable to make an effective greeting at the entrance try to position yourself in the direction the guest may be walking within the store. Stand on an angle and allow the guest to walk towards you.

### ***Verbal Communication***

The guest who walks through your door is most often not going to tell you directly what they are looking for. With your million dollar smile, welcome them to the store. Then follow your welcome with questions that causes

your guests to answer. Your number one objective is to ask questions that will give you the answers to begin to qualify what your guest needs:

*“Welcome to (store name), my name is (name), may I ask yours?”*

*“Do you mind if I ask what brings you into our store today?”*

The guest may tell you what they are looking for. However sometimes they may tell you they are “just looking or browsing”. Respond by asking more questions.

*Would you allow me to save some of your valuable time today?”*

*May I ask if this is the first time visiting our store?*

*Have you heard or read about our big sale?*

*Can I offer you one of our flyers?*

Definition of browsing: to wonder aimlessly! This is very true. Your guest will aimlessly wonder until you are able to help them fill their need.

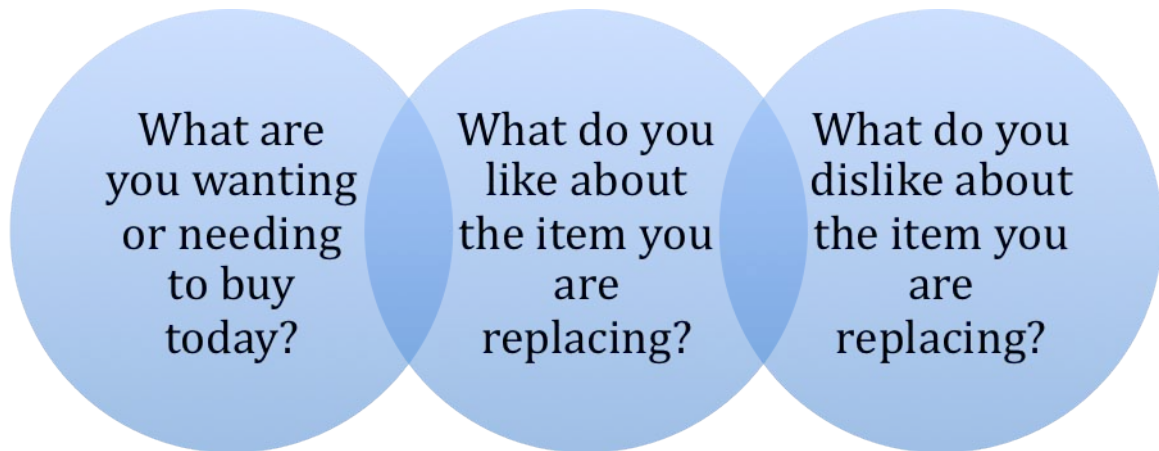
Remember to practice your effective greetings and to discard your non-effective greetings. Once you have developed a skill to have several effective greetings the more and more you use them you will have developed a good productive habit.

*Million Dollar Tip* — Place a small mirror on your desk or your work station to help you practice that million dollar smile. Each time you are on the phone, keep the mirror in front of you and smile while you are talking. This will help you practice your smile and transfer your positive attitude through the phone as well. The more you practice the better your smile will be. Write down on paper several greetings and record them every time you use them. If they are working, practice to make them better. If they are not working change them or discard them. Remember the number one objective is to ask questions that will give you answers so that it will allow you to begin qualifying. Only then do you have an effective greeting.

## **2. QUALIFYING**

Qualifying questions will raise you to the top. Once you’ve mastered these key questions you’ll see your confidence rise to a new level and your sales will increase! Guests will come to appreciate your input and feel confident in your suggestions. Everything about your sale will come together more

naturally and comfortably for both you and your guest. Once you've learned these skills you won't ever turn back.



Remember, guests are not professional buyer and they need a professional salesperson to qualify their need. As these qualifying questions are answered, you are deciding which product will best meet this prospective guest's needs. That is the product you intend to sell them.

Once you find out the likes and dislikes of the product the guest is using now, you can then lead them to the product that will best meet their needs and desires. Once the guest experiences the benefits of the product you show them, these benefits will increase the guest's dissatisfaction with their product at home and will increase their desire for the new product. Remember the more the guest is dissatisfied with the product at home, the greater the desire will be for the guest to enjoy the benefits of the new product.

If the guest is not replacing an item but is buying something new for their home, once they have answered your question as to what they might be looking for now or in the future, you now have some direction as to how you can help them. For example, they might say a mattress or sofa. Now you can show them some of the models you have in that category in your store and then begin to qualify them using the product you are showing them. What do they like about it? What don't they like about it? These qualifying questions will help you and the guest to find out what their likes and dislikes are. This will enable you to direct the guest to the product that will best satisfy their desires and needs.

### ***How do we qualify?***

One of the most important things to remember when you are qualifying is to know your products and where the products are located on your sales floor. This is very important so that you can direct the guest to the product that will best meet their needs. When you ask questions about what they did not like about the product they presently have you are raising their level of dissatisfaction. Their desire to buy a new product will increase. When you direct them to the products that meet their desire then the guest starts to enjoy these benefits. Their level of satisfaction will increase. If you "stroke the fires of their desire, you will not fail to make the sale".

Here's one of the biggest mistakes salespeople make. When a guest comes in with your flyer or ad, looking for a specific item, we too often assume the guest is a professional buyer and knows what they need, thus we don't bother to qualify. Too many sales are lost because the salesperson takes the guest to the item they saw in the flyer, and most often the guest will tell you "this is the first place we've been, we may be back". Why that response? *Because we neglected to qualify the needs and wants of the guest.* There is a product in your store that will meet the needs and wants of the guest. The item that brought them in off the flyer is most often not this item. Qualifying and directing the guest to the best products to meet these needs and wants is how to ensure the sale.

### ***Top Sellers***

20% of your product does most of your business. Know where those products are on your floor and know about all the benefits they provide.

### ***Other Qualifying Questions:***

- Do you mind if I ask a couple of questions that would save your valuable time today?
- Is this the first time you've been in our store? What brought you here today?
- Do you mind if I ask what you have now?
- What did you like about the product you have?
- What did you not like about the product you have?
- What is the purpose for the item? (For example, is the item for a formal room or a casual room? Will it get a lot of use or little use? Is it for yourself or a guest room?)
- Mattresses - When you wake up in the morning, do find yourself on your side, back or front?

- Mattresses - Have you ever had a sleep comfort test before?

### ***Listening to the Answers***

After you ask a question, always listen to the guest's response. Remember God gave us one mouth and two ears.

Before entering your store many guest assume they have the information they already need for the product they are looking for. By asking qualifying questions we can provide the guest with the information to make a better buying decision. Quite often by doing this the guest ends up with a product that will better meet their needs. Your guests will thank you!

## **3. COMPARISON**

Selection comparison provides the guest a chance to compare products in your own store. This allows the guest the selection needed to raise the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Selection comparison promotes the guest to buy now rather than going elsewhere to compare.

### ***Key Word - Benefits***

Remember people buy for the benefit the product provides. The greater the benefit the more value put on the product. The more value put on the product, the more the guest stands to lose.

To help best understand comparison selection and benefits we will use the mattress department for example. Using 9 Beds for our comparison - firm, medium and soft in a high price range; firm, medium and soft in a mid price range; and firm, medium and soft in a lower price range.

Once you have determined the comfort level and firmness your guest prefers, you can then use the 2 beds in the similar firmness and comfort from the 2 other price ranges to establish the sale through comfort comparison and price. As they go lower in price the more comfort the guest will likely lose.

Remember the story about Goldilocks and the three bears. The first bed was too hard. The second bed was too soft. The third bed was "just right" (the sale was made). Goldilocks would not been able to say "this bed is just right", without having the other two beds to compare it to. Had she not had the comparison, it might have been just okay but definitely not "just right". When she felt discomfort it raised her level of satisfaction for the bed she found that was "just right". Her level of satisfaction became stronger on the bed of her choice because there was comparison.



Have a plan to give your guests a comparison selection in each category of your store.

Let your guest feel the benefits that your products have to offer and help them determine what will best meet their needs in the budget permitted. By having the products and price ranges to compare benefits you will help your guests to find what's "just right" for them.

Keeping in mind throughout the sale that every time the price is lowered the guest will lose some of the benefits the product provides.

Fear of loss can be a very powerful tool in the buying decision. When the Comparison Selection is done correctly, most often the guest will make a new decision and buy the better product that is over their original budget.

#### **4. PRESENTATION**

The presentation is your total interaction with the guest. Your presentation has to be convincing, accurate and honest... ***when the value of the product exceeds the price tag, that's when the guest buys it!***

You need to ensure your presentation highlights the value of the product.

Be confident — and know product every feature every benefit!

##### ***Your Presentation and its Objectives***

When the value of the product outweighs the price you will not fail to make the sale.

Although your presentation of features and their benefits may seem old to you, they are still ***the only reason*** a guest will make the purchase.

When you cover the features and their benefits for your products and your competitor does not, it gives you the advantage. Although your competitor may have the same product, and sometimes even at a lower price, your guests will assume the competitor's product does not have the same features and benefits as you have just explained in your store or they would have said so.

Remember... when you show more features and demonstrate more benefits than your competitors, you will always get the sale.

Again, a good presentation is never "old" or "worn out" — it is the reason the guest buys. You should always be working to improve it.



***You can't see it but you can sell it.***

Can you imagine a guest buying something they can't see, feel, touch, smell or sense in any way? Well you should be able to because you sell it every day. It is "Fabric protection". This is the best example of "the fear of loss" that one can imagine when presented properly. The guest can't touch or see what you are selling, but your presentation causes them to take action to avoid the "fear of loss".

***What's it worth?***

Your job is to also explain the price of the product to your guest. The professional does this by taking each feature of his product and explaining



thoroughly the benefits of this feature to the guest. These multiple benefits will exceed the price and emphasize the value in the product. When done correctly the guest will not want to lose any of the benefits and will see the value in their purchase.

Remember, practice your presentation! By doing so you become more believable and more confident. The more confident you become, the more confidence your guest will have in you and your product.

## 5. **SALE**

At the conclusion of your presentation, ask for the sale... How would you like to pay for your purchase? Do you require delivery? Is there anything else I can do for you today? Write the order, detailing it as you go.

If the guest is still unsure and they are not ready to make the purchase, then you need to re-qualify the guest. Perhaps you missed an important consideration that you then failed to address when trying to satisfy the guest.

## 6. **REINFORCE**

An experienced salesperson will reinforce the sale to create a more satisfied guest. Show the guest the product they just purchased and recap all its features and benefits. Be sure to mention what a great choice it was and that they will be pleased with the product they have chosen; mention that it is the product you would have chosen.

## 7. **NEXT PURCHASE**

Even though your guest has purchased what they came in for, don't forget to make a "next purchase". Next purchase questions can lead to additional sale or sales.

*"Do you mind telling me what you think you will be buying next or your home? Then I can keep an eye out for you and if something comes in that I think would interest you I will give you a call. You might want to stop in and take a look".*

Or consider this "next purchase" experience by a top salesperson:

*"Do you mind me asking, it could be today or tomorrow, or maybe even the near future, but if you were looking to replace or add anything to your home, what would that be?" She told me she was looking for "a curio". I asked if it was replacing another one? She replied that it was to be a second curio to*

match the one she already has. Once we qualified the colours, size and uses for the curio, I was able to lead her to just the right one. After this sale I asked the same woman the question again, *"If you don't mind me asking, it could be today or maybe tomorrow, or maybe even further down the road, what item might you be looking for next for your lovely home?"* She replied "a reclining chair". After qualifying her, I was able to show her just the right chair and the sale was made to her satisfaction. I asked yet again the "what might be next question", and to my pleasure she replied "a reading lamp". Same process as above and the guest also bought the reading lamp. Before the guest left the store I was also able to find out that she would be looking for a new sofa in the next 6–12 months.

These qualifying questions may not always lead to a multi item, however once you start asking and qualifying you will see your sales increase and your guest satisfaction will skyrocket.

## **8. SAYING GOOD BYE**

Saying good bye is the eighth essential step in selling. Let your guest know you are thankful for letting you help them. Reassure them that you will follow up in a few days to make sure everything is okay. Hand them 2 or 3 of your business cards. Make eye contact and remember to smile! Consider the following scenario from John F. Lawhon:

*"Mrs. Smith, I want to you to have my card. If you have any reason to call our company I want you to call me first so that I can see your needs are taken care of promptly". As you say this, give the satisfied guest 2 or 3 of your cards. The guest will invariably realize this and start to hand one back, saying, "You gave me two cards". Your response, "I know that Mrs. Smith, but it was such a pleasure to help you today — I bet that your friends are just like you. Should any of them have any need for anything that I sell, please give them my card. I would be glad to help them in any way I can."*

## **9. FOLLOW UP**

Continue the relationship with your guest by sending a thank you note (handwritten preferably). An appropriate series of phone calls are an important part of the sales process...

- a phone call prior to delivery;
- a phone call after delivery; and
- a phone call 3 months after sale.

A great follow-up gives an effective salesperson a huge advantage over

their less rigorous competitor. If you can make your guest feel like you've thought about them and would like to help them, the more likely they are to classify you as "someone to trust".

Following up positions you above your competitor so you can generate more business from your existing guests. It shows that your company is helpful and organized and really cares about satisfying guests.

Follow-up isn't just about selling. It's about building relationships.