The Seven Stages of Selling - Full Guide

Selling Is a Process, Not a Personality Trait

The Seven Stages of Selling are also Seven Opportunities to Provide Fabulous Customer Service!

We all go through these stages when buying as well as selling. By understanding each stage, you can make it easier for people to discover your services, decide whether they're right for them, and book with confidence.

Follow my step-by-step process to help clients enjoy buying from you.

1. Approach

Help people discover you and your services.

Approach is any way, you get in front of new people, who don't yet know you.

For example:

- Talking to people about what you do.
- Local events, workshops and networking.
- Recommendations and introductions.
- Collaborating with other businesses.
- Your website, social media, email or advertising.

Remember: People can't buy from you if they don't know you exist.

2. Build Rapport

Help people feel comfortable with you. (The know, like, trust me stage)

Rapport is when clients think or feel, "they understand me, I like them, I trust them". It's the friendly, human bit.

Think about a local shop you visit regularly. They might know you? You know where everything is, and crucially, you feel comfortable going back regularly. That ease matters.

Build rapport by:

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- Being warm, friendly and approachable.
- Listening properly and keeping confidentiality.
- Asking questions and showing interest.
- Remembering people and their preferences (keep notes).
- Sharing a little about yourself when appropriate.

Remember: People are more likely to buy from someone they feel safe with and trust.

3. Identify Needs and Share Testimonials

This is where you understand what they actually want – and show them how you can help.

First, identify their needs:

- What are they struggling with?
- What do they want to change?
- What would "better" look like for them?

Then, share relevant proof:

- Examples of clients you've worked with.
- Results people have had.
- Facts, patterns or outcomes you see regularly.

Testimonials work best when they are **specific to what the person has just told you**. Not what's important to you.

For example:

"Your 'what to expect before and after' explanation on your website was really helpful and reassuring."

Or share your experience, for example, "I've worked with at least 20 clients in a similar situation, and here's an example of how I've helped."

Remember: A relevant testimonial helps to reassure a client - you understand their needs and can provide a good experience for them - in their particular situation.

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4. Make a Proposal (Your Offer)

Explain what you recommend and invite them to book.

This is often the stage people skip!

A proposal is simply explaining:

- What service you recommend.
- What happens during the service (if relevant).
- How long it takes.
- How much it costs.
- How to book.

For example:

"Based on what you've told me, I'd recommend six sessions to create the impact you're looking for. It costs £X. Would you like to book the first date now?"

Remember: People love to be invited.

5. Overcome Objections

Answer questions and concerns honestly.

People may be interested but still have questions about:

- Money: Can I afford it?
- Time: How long will it take?
- Uncertainty: Will this actually work for me?

You can answer these concerns:

- In conversation.
- On your website, using FAQs.
- Through relevant testimonials.
- By clearly explaining what to expect.

If you know the questions people commonly ask, answer them before they even have to ask. It saves you time, gives great customer service, and reduces the number of people who say no.

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Remember: "No" doesn't mean "I loathe you!" It often just means "Not for me" or "Not right now." I can't remember how many times people have said: "Not for me, too expensive, no way." Then, the following week, I see their partner, friend or colleague, whom they have referred!

6. Transaction and Payment

Make booking and paying simple.

Once someone decides to book, make the next steps clear and easy.

- Explain how to book.
- Confirm the appointment, location and price.
- Make payment straightforward.
- Get paid in advance or on the day.
- Explain any cancellation arrangements (if relevant).

Don't overwhelm new clients with unnecessary information. Give them what they need to feel comfortable and prepared for their appointment or service.

Remember: Good customer service includes making it easy for people to buy from you.

7. Follow Up

Check how your clients are doing because you care, not because you need more business.

Follow-up might include:

- A friendly message after their appointment or service, where appropriate.
- Checking whether they have any questions.
- Asking for feedback.
- Inviting them to book again if they'd like to.
- Asking for a review or testimonial at a suitable time.

Keep your genuine interest in the client separate from asking for reviews or further bookings.

Good follow-up strengthens relationships and can lead naturally to repeat services, recommendations and testimonials.

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Remember: Fabulous customer service doesn't end when the service finishes.

Now Put It Into Practice!

Beginner: Score Yourself

Give yourself a score out of 10 for each stage.

Stage	Score /10
1. Approach	
2. Build Rapport	
3. Identify Needs and Share Testimonials	
4. Make a Proposal/Your Offer	
5. Overcome Objections	
6. Transaction and Payment	
7. Follow Up	

Action: Keep doing what works and improve the areas where you score lower.

Intermediate: Look at What You're Already Doing

List all the different ways you currently cover each of the seven stages.

Double-check that you don't have a blind spot and missing whole stages - which is surprisingly common.

Action: Put the list on the wall to remind you.

Advanced: Create Seven Social Media Posts, Newsletters or Blogs

Create one post for each of the seven stages.

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For example:

- **Approach:** Introduce yourself and explain what you do.
- **Rapport:** Share something about yourself or why you love your work.
- **Identify Needs:** Share a reason clients buy along with a relevant testimonial.
- **Proposal:** Explain a service, its price and how to book.
- **Overcome Objections:** Address a common concern about your service.
- **Payment:** Demonstrate how easy it is to book and pay.
- **Follow Up:** Explain how you look after clients following their service.

Action: Use the same approach in other marketing - website, blogs, newsletters, etc.

A Final Thought

You don't need to be pushy or become a different person to sell your services. Just make it easy for people to buy from you, and provide fabulous customer service at every stage.

About Jenny Duck/Bracelin

Jenny Duck is a heartfelt business coach and adviser with over 25 years' experience. She won the UK National Customer Service Award in 1998 with her first business - hiring out tablecloths. And helping self-employed people fall in love with business since 1995 - improving their selling, customer service, and profitability.

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