

Understanding Buyer's Behaviour

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I. Introduction

Have you noticed how most people don't like salespeople, or being sold to?

I sometimes ask people who aren't in sales what they don't like about salespeople.

What people think about Salespeople?

- They're too pushy
- They don't listen
- They don't really care about me
- They're only interested in selling me something
- They get aggressive if I say I'm not interested

These opinions of people about salespeople are revealed the most **"Transactional Approach"** use by salespeople to reach their objectives and are very controvert to **"Relationship Approach"**, which is very customer-centric and need-centric as well drive to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Transactional vs. Relationship Approaches.

Transactional-Focused vs. Relationship-Focused Selling

Selling Elements	Transactional-focused Selling	Relationship-focused Selling
Focus	Solicitation of one-time sales	Customer retention
Performance Measures	Return on Investment (ROI), Value of sales, batting average	Lifetime value
Orientation	Transactions	Customer relationships
Time horizon	Short-term	Long-time
Customer services	Little emphasis as transactions are key	Strong emphasis as long-term relationships are key

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The unusual thing although is that most people like to buy things. So what's the

problem? The problem is that many salespeople have a preferred style of selling and find it difficult to sell to different buyers. I ask people on my sales workshop to describe their preferred way of buying.

You get different replies:

- I like to take my time
- I'm an impulse buyer
- I like my partner to be with me
- I like to compare different products
- I don't like being sold to.
- I like to make my own mind up

Customer Relationships Approach

What is about CRA?	
Reduce rates of customer defection	deliver personalized service
Increase longevity of relationships	involve customers
Enhance customer growth potential	Cross- and Up-Sell
Make low profit customers more profitable	terminate, reduce features, pay more

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One feature of modern, relationship selling is that we need to understand about peoples' preferred buying behaviour if we are to sell to more of them. It is a fact that people buy differently.

1. Some people prefer to buy quickly, others slowly.
2. Some people/buyers need a lot of information and detail, for others a sheet of A4 with bullet points is all the information they need.
3. Some buyers make purchases on impulse; others take their time and try to avoid risk.

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4. Some buyers are very loyal; others will choose the cheapest option automatically.
5. Some buyers can be quite intimidating to the point of being rude; others are quite passive and easily manipulated.

This makes selling a real challenge. To sell to all these different buyer types we need to be able to adapt our selling behaviour and make the buying process easy for each type of buyer we come across.

II. Classification Of Buying Type

To begin this process we need to look at 2 aspects of buyer behaviour; assertiveness and responsiveness.

1. Assertiveness

People who are **assertive** are confident and know what they want. They are not afraid to put forward opinions and are willing to listen to the opinions of others. They are not afraid of conflict and will be more than happy to argue their case. People who are **highly assertive** can be seen as being aggressive while people who **lack assertiveness** are often passive and get taken advantage of. There are times when it is appropriate to be more or less assertive and we need to recognise when these times are.

2. Responsiveness

Responsiveness means the extent to which people are willing to respond to us and our questions. Some people/buyers are **highly responsive** and will give a lots of information about themselves, their **problems** and **needs**. Others are **unwilling** or **unable** to respond in this way and we

see these people often as being negative or difficult.

*There are **four basic styles of behaviour** and these are determined by the way, in which people relate to one another.*



People who lack assertiveness and responsiveness are called Analyticals.

A. The Analyticals

- The analytical buyer distrusts salespeople because they lack precision.
- Analyticals like to analyse and compare things.
- They take their time and are wary of making quick decisions.
- They deal in facts and like things to be objective rather than subjective.
- They tend not to confidant in social situations and hate small talk.
- They avoid risk taking and like things to be put in writing and in detail.
- They find salespeople to be intimidating especially if they feel under pressure.
- Their main tactic for getting rid of salespeople is to stop replying to their voice mails.

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B. The amiable buyer

- The amiable buyer is highly responsive, but not very assertive.
- They are very friendly, good in social situations and prefer friendly relationships to conflict.
- Many salespeople are amiable in their nature.
- Amiables lack assertiveness so will agree to appointments and meetings, but are they wasting your time?
- They tell you what the competition are up to, but what are they telling the competition about you?
- Look after your amiable customers. They are loyal and unlikely to move to a competitor because that involves certain degree of conflict and they hate giving bad news.
- They are nice people to be around, but find difficulty saying no and in negotiations tend to give everything away.

C. The expressive buyer

- The expressive buyer is highly assertive and highly responsive.
- They are impulse buyers with low boredom thresholds and a short attention span.
- They love to buy concepts and will make quick, if not always good, decisions.
- They don't want a lot of detail and will not read detailed proposals.
- They are not good listeners and like brainstorming sessions.
- They are confident and flamboyant, but not great when it comes to detailed thought and analysis.
- In negotiations they start off strong but get bored and will often make a concession just to get things over with.

- Expressives buy on the day. Get some sort of commitment from them while you can.
- Once you have gone they will be moving on to their next project and will have forgotten about you.

D. The Driver

- The Driver is highly assertive, but not very responsive.
- This is the typical negotiator.
- Tough, uncompromising, doesn't suffer fools gladly and determined to be in charge.
- Drivers want to be in control and can appear to be aggressive if you don't give them what they want.
- They seem unfriendly at first and will impose time deadlines on meetings.
- The Driver doesn't want to be your friend, so the typical salesperson will irritate the Driver, who will often bully the salesperson into submission.
- The Driver drives a hard bargain and wants to win.

III. How Do We Deal With Them?

The answer is that they need to be dealt with differently. We speak here from "Differential Sales Approach" (DSA). We have to match their preferred style by becoming more or less assertive and responsive. The simplest way to sum this up is that drivers like to buy from drivers, amiables like to buy from amiables, expressive like to buy from expressives and analyticals like to buy from analyticals.

Whatever our preferred style we have to match the behaviour of the person we are

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selling to. Speed up, slow down, get into the detail, sell concepts, be friends, or don't bother or worry.

Analyticals

- Don't push them into making quick decisions
- Take your time. Slow down
- Take action rather than words to demonstrate helpfulness and willingness.
- Sticks to specifics - Analyticals expect salespeople to overstate.
- Their decisions are based on facts and logic and they avoid risk.
- They can often be very co-operative, but established relationships take time.
- Consider telling them what the product won't do - they will respect you for it, and they will have spotted the deficiencies anyway.
- Discuss reasons and ask 'why?' questions.

Amiables

- Be their friend.
- Work, jointly, seek common ground.
- Find out about personal interests and family.
- Be patient and avoid going for what looks like an easy pushover.
- Use personal assurance and specific guarantees and avoid options and probabilities.
- Take time to be agreeable.
- Focus discussion on 'how'.
- Demonstrate low risk solutions.

Expressives

- Look for the flip chart in their office
- Let them do the work. Ask open questions

- Seek opinions in an area you wish to develop to achieve mutual understanding.
- Discussion should be people as well as fact oriented.
- Keep summarising - work out specifics on points of agreement.
- Try short, fast moving experience stories.
- Close them down today. Get some commitment

Drivers

- Be assertive. Use eye contact. Stand up for yourself
- Plan to ask questions about and discuss specifics, actions and results.
- Use facts and logic.
- When necessary, disagree with facts rather than opinions.
- Keep it business-like, efficient and to the point.
- Personal guarantees and testimonials are least effective - better to provide options and facts.
- Learn how to say no.

IV. Conclusion

People buy differently, so we should sell to them *differently*. Understand your own preferred style and the strengths and weaknesses it brings to the way you sell. You have to learn to be *flexible* if you are going to sell to a wider range of people. Work on being more or less assertive and more or less responsive and you will sell to more people.

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