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# welcome to sales

# through great service

This workbook has been designed to complement your learning and help you to provide the great service our customers deserve. The workbook details the cornerstones of customer service within Dunelm. It will take you through our service model and introduce some ideas that will turn great service into great sales.

## **Who needs to complete the workbook?**

It is aimed at all team members in the store who interact with customers.

## **How much time do I have to complete it?**

You need to complete your workbook within three months of starting work in the store.

## **How do I use the workbook?**

The workbook explains how to complete each part of your role and the process in detail. You will be able to demonstrate your understanding by answering specific questions in each section.

The workbook includes activities that ask you to actively find out information – but don't worry, there are plenty of people to help you along the way!

You can also use the workbook as a reference guide on the shop floor.



# people buy people first and the product second

Imagine you are walking along your local High Street when you realise you need to buy something. You spot a shop where the product is available at the right price.

So you go in, pick the product up and take it to the till ... and that's where it all goes wrong. The sales assistant barely looks up, takes your money, throws your change at you and then starts serving the next customer.

The next time you're walking down the street and you need to buy the same product, what will you do? The chances are that you'll look for somewhere else to buy it. So, imagine you do just that, only this time the service is different. The sales assistant smiles, says hello, comments on how good the product is that you just bought, thanks you and says goodbye.

The product is identical and you paid the same price for it. Where will you go to buy it next time?

Of course, we'd all go to the second shop, and rightly so. The other thing we'd all do is keep going back to the second shop every time we thought it could help us.

Remember: People buy people first and the product second!





# choose your attitude

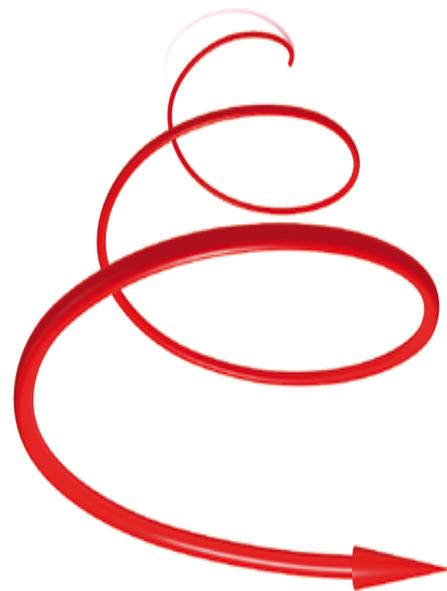
What makes a good sales assistant a great sales assistant? Often it's down to the attitude you choose.

Choosing the right attitude is the key to delivering great service. The problem is most people don't choose their attitude. In fact, some people don't even believe they **can** choose their attitude.

Most people allow the events that happen in their life influence how they feel, and this in turn influences their behaviour.

If you think positively, you create what we call the spiral of positivity and it's an essential element in delivering the service that our customers deserve.

## Having a bad day?



- Overslept
- Car won't start
- Stuck in traffic
- Allocations
- Campaign setup
- Customers
- CRASH!**

Imagine. It's a Monday morning and as you wake up you realise you forgot to set the alarm and now you are running late. You get ready really quickly, feeling rushed, and dash out to the car. It won't start. "Typical!" you say to yourself, "Now I'm going to be in trouble for being late." To add insult to injury you get stuck in the roadworks on the way to work, so by the time you arrive at work you're really late.

Then you realise that the delivery has arrived early and you now have to sort that out. They've sent loads of new products and you're going to have to figure out what to do with them. Just as you think you've sorted the delivery, your manager asks you to move everything because there's a new campaign to launch.

The store's now open and you've had enough. That's when you meet your first customer and guess what – it doesn't go well...

# Behaviour breeds behaviour

It's bad enough that you're having a bad day, but now you'll influence the mood of everyone around you. Your bad day will start to spread and everyone you meet will take a bit of that mood from you. Then they'll start to spread their bad mood and pretty soon, the whole store is in the doldrums.

It's really easy to focus on these events and let them ruin our attitude but it's not the way it has to be. Instead of focusing on what's gone wrong, choose to focus on what's going well and tell people about it.

In the same way that negative behaviour spreads, so does positivity. Of course, it takes work but just think about how you'd prefer to feel. Get yourself on a positive spiral!

# activity

Look at this list of things people say every day (you may have said them yourself). Try to think of a more positive way of thinking about each one and write down what you might say to deliver the same message in a positive way.

- Look at the weather! It's going to be dead in the store today.

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- Look at all these pallets of stock! Where am I going to put it all?

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- There's so much work to do.

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- Your order won't be ready for four weeks.

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- I can't offer you a refund.

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Now add some examples of your own.

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Sometimes people may tell you to "Think positive!" That's not enough. You need to act positive!



# great customer service gets you the sale

So far, we've looked at the fundamental aspects of customer service:

- People buy people first and the product second.
- Choose your attitude.
- Behaviour breeds behaviour.

Getting these steps right will go a long way towards delivering great service. If you understand these concepts and put them into action, then you'll certainly have the right attitude to deliver.

Wanting to succeed is only part of the story though. It's what we actually do that counts.

Next, we'll look at the steps that will help you discover some techniques to deliver superb service **and** increase sales.

Here are the four steps to getting the SALE:

1. **S**peak to your customers.
2. **A**vailable to help.
3. **L**isten to the customer.
4. **E**xplain what we can do for our customers.

## **Step 1 – Speak to your customers**

We need to speak to our customers. That may sound obvious, yet our Mystery Shopper reports tell us that we often miss out this crucial step. This prevents our customers from receiving great service, and will lead to missed sales opportunities.

The first chance we have to make a great impression is when we greet our customers.

## Greeting your customers

Everything we've looked at so far is geared towards mentally preparing us for the moment when we encounter our customers. If we've chosen the right attitude, there's a good chance we'll spread our positivity to our customers, so we're already on to a winner.

Let's now look at some really easy steps to greeting a customer in a way that sends the right message about Dunelm, makes them feel welcome, and helps us to increase sales.

There are only three steps to a great greeting:

- Say hello (or whatever you feel comfortable with – good morning, hi, etc.)
- Smile.
- Hold eye contact.

Let's look at how this works in practice.

A customer comes into your department and you say hello with a smile. You get eye contact and you hold it (just for a split second) and one of two things will happen.

- The customer says hello, smiles back and carries on shopping.
- The customer says hello, smiles and then holds eye contact with you.

# activity

If the customer says hello, smiles and then carries on shopping, what does this tell you?

When customers carry on shopping, it tells us that they are fine; they don't need your help at the moment. You can keep doing all those tasks that you need to complete and as long as the customer remains your priority, that's fine. We'll look at what to do if they do need your help later in the workbook.

Let's look at the other response you may get:

- The customer says hello, smiles and then holds eye contact with you.

At this point you'll be tempted to say something like "Can I help you?" or "Are you OK?"

We ask these questions because we've all heard them a thousand times when we've been shopping. The problem is, most of the times we're asked these questions when we don't need help, or worse still, before we've had chance to see what's in the store. This conditions us to give the same response:

"No thanks, I'm just looking!"

When this happens, you feel like you should leave the customers alone forever and the customers feel like they're in one of those stores where everyone is trying to pressure them into buying something. In short, it doesn't work.

Instead of leaping in with the question (we know what the result will be), wait a moment. There's a reason the customers haven't carried on shopping – they want to ask you something and you've just given them the chance to ask you.

Things customers will say next:

- "I don't suppose you sell...?"
- "Have you got any...?"
- "Have you got this in a double size?"

They feel comfortable to ask you because you said hello, you smiled and you held eye contact. All of these things tell customers they can trust you: you are friendly and you are there for them.

# activity

Go out on to the shop floor and try the greeting out with at least six customers. Write down what happens below.

Customer 1

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Customer 2

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Customer 3

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Customer 4

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Customer 5

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Customer 6

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## How to structure a sales conversation

Sometimes customers know exactly what they want and may simply need your help to find the right size, colour, etc.

There are times, however, when a customer has a problem to solve or an aspiration to meet and they don't know the right solution. That's where your expertise can really help to assist sales and deliver the right solution to the customer.

# activity

In which areas/departments of our stores do customers need more assistance to find the right solution?

## Using questions to find the right solution

When the customer is not sure what the solution is, we need to help find it by asking the right questions.

We first need to ask questions that will tell us what the problem or aspiration is, then move onto questions that will help give us the information we need to build a solution for them.

A technique that works really well is called the funnel technique. This works by starting with broader, more vague ideas, then narrowing down to specifics later. At the end of the process you should be able to offer a good solution (or choice of solutions).

Broad concepts and ideas



Specific solutions

Using the funnel technique allows customers to tell their story without having to worry about whether what they are saying is right. Your job is to pull out the important information as you go along, so you can use that information later to provide the best solutions.

### How does the funnel work?

The technique works by asking the right kinds of questions at the right stage. Let's take a look at some commonly-used question types and when they can be used to help you get the sale.

# activity

## Question types

We can use a variety of different types of question to get the information we need to be able to help.

**Open questions** are useful in getting another person to speak. They often begin with the words: What, Why, When and Who.

Sometimes they are statements, such as: "Tell me about ..." and "Give me examples of ..."

Open questions can provide you with a good deal of information. They work really well at the top end of the funnel when we want to find out as much as possible.

**Probing questions** check for more detail or clarification. Probing questions allow you to explore specific areas. However, be careful because they can easily make people feel they are being interrogated. Use probing questions to get more technical detail, or simply to clarify something that you think could be useful.

**Closed questions** require a yes or no answer and are useful for checking facts. Use them with care – too many closed questions can cause frustration and shut down conversation. Closed questions come in useful towards the end of the funnel when you are looking at providing options. For example "Do you prefer this style?"

**Reflective questions** are used to repeat what you think the customer has said, to check that you have understood correctly. For example "Did you say you like very modern fabrics?"

Use the space below to give an example of an open question you could use:

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Use the space below to give an example of a probing question you could use:

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Use the space below to give an example of a closed question you could use:

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Use the space below to give an example of a reflective question you could use:

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## Step 2 – Available to help

Being there for the customer is vital in Dunelm. Customers can need our help at any time, and in some areas of the store customers simply cannot buy our products without our help.

The first thing to do is to make sure that there are always enough people on the sales floor to help customers. Of course, there are some tasks that may take you away from the sales floor, but it's how you balance those tasks with customer time that makes the difference.

# activity

Write down the tasks that you need to do that could take you away from customers and try to come up with a way that will minimise the impact this has on your customers.

Task	Solution

Being available to help means maximising the time you can spend on the sales floor and making sure that you keep your focus on your customer.



# activity

## What help do our customers need?

Look at the list below of the things customers might ask, and write down what you might need to do to ensure you are able to help them.

Example: Do you sell bathroom scales?

*I need to have a good knowledge of product range and store layout.*

Do you sell this in a single size?

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How long do curtains take to be made?

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Do you deliver?

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Is there a pair of curtains in the pack?

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Can I order online?

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Do you have a store in...?

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Can I exchange this product?

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Can you order one in for me?

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Now add some things customers have asked you, and what you needed so you could help them.

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So far we've looked at choosing the right attitude, speaking to our customers and being available to help. We've looked at some useful questioning techniques. Now it's really important we get all the information we need by listening to our customers.

## Step 3 – Listen to the customer

If we ask the right questions, we should find out lots of useful information. However, it's more important that we listen to what the customer is telling us.

Have you ever felt like someone in a store just isn't listening to you? It's almost as if they made up their mind about what to offer you before you even began the conversation. As a customer, you probably didn't like this, so let's make sure we don't do the same to our customers.

# activity

Look at the scenarios below and pick out three key things the customer has told you that will help to get the right solution for them:

"Our daughter is coming back from university, so we need to get the spare room ready for her to use for a few weeks. The room's full of junk at the moment so we need to get everything."

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

"We've just had an extension built so we can have a dining room for the first time. We really enjoy spending time together and want to make this room a real centre piece of the house. Christmas dinner's going to be fantastic with everyone coming over."

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Listening to our customers gives us some clues about what kind of solutions to come up with but it's really important to check by asking more questions until both you and your customer know what the solution looks like.

## Step 4 – Explain what we can do for our customers

Some of our customers arrive in-store with a pretty clear idea of what they need. They may not know where to find it, or how much it will cost, but essentially they have already decided what to buy.

That doesn't apply to all our customers, however, and some may need considerable help. If you've followed all the steps we've already looked at, your customers will rely on you to guide them and offer the right solution for them. This may involve products or services they didn't even know were available.

When we become familiar with something, we find it really difficult to imagine what it must be like not to know as much as us. This is called "the curse of knowledge". It's often one of the reasons we don't offer the customer the right choices because we assume they know what those choices are and have already decided against some of them.

The curse of knowledge can also strike when we expect customers to understand our business processes, procedures and jargon.

Here are some examples of the curse of knowledge at work:

### Custom-made curtains

- Assuming the customer looking at packet curtains has already decided not to buy lined curtains, or have some custom made.

How can they ask about custom-made curtains if they don't know we do them? (53% of our customers don't.)

### Coffee flavourings

- Assuming the customer knows we sell coffee flavourings and will ask if they want some in their drink.

If they've never tried flavour in their coffee, how do you know they don't want it?

### Make-up

- Telling customers now is a good time to order because we have "20% off make-up during June".

Do customers know what "make-up" is? Maybe they think you're selling cosmetics!





# get to know your products

Often our customers are surprised at our product range, the value we offer and some of the services we provide. In order to explain what we do, we need to have good product knowledge.

The good news is that improving your product knowledge can be easier than you think.

The first place to look for product knowledge is on the product and its packaging. Manufacturers want to sell their products too, so will often use the packaging to tell customers as much as they can to sell the product.

## Features, advantages and benefits

To sell products successfully, it's important to understand what these three things are and the difference between them. Let's look at each in turn:

**Features** are attributes of the product like size, length, weight, colour, texture, etc. Often these are the things manufacturers list. Features don't often sell the product, they merely describe it.

**Advantages** are things that make this product better than others available. Again manufacturers often list these advantages: bigger, faster, lighter, easier to clean, etc.

**Benefits** are what sell the product to most people. These are the things that make a difference to the customer's life. Benefits can often be subjective – what is a benefit to one customer may not be for someone else. Let's look at this description to see all three in action:

- This vacuum cleaner's high speed motor (**feature**) works twice as fast (**advantage**) with less effort (**advantage**), which saves you 15 to 30 minutes in cleaning time (**benefit**) and the aches and pains of pushing a heavy machine (**benefit**).

# activity

Choose three products from the store and list the key features, advantages and benefits for each. Try to pick at least one product you are not very familiar with.

Product	Features	Advantages	Benefits

Explaining what we do can help to make a sale, particularly when we remember to keep using customer-friendly language; don't assume the customer always knows what we offer; and focus on benefits. We can then use this skill to gain further sales and provide an even better service to our customers by introducing them to perfect partners.

## What are perfect partners?

These are the products that go naturally with a purchase. So, if a customer buys a lamp, then a light bulb is a natural perfect partner.

Some perfect partners, like the light bulb example, are very functional in nature. Some, on the other hand, are more about completing a look or feel of a room.

# activity

Come up with a perfect partner for each of these products:

A pillowcase

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A kitchen bin

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A cup of coffee

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A cushion

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To introduce the idea of a perfect partner, you need first to ensure the customer is going to buy the first product. You'll know this because the customer is now holding the product, has placed the item in the basket/trolley, or has thanked you and is ready to go and pay.

Once this has happened, you simply need to mention the perfect partner. For example, say: "We have some lovely cushions that go well with that range. Would you like me to show you some?"

The customer will either look at the product (and maybe buy it), or choose not to. Either way, you have explained what we do, and the customer is better informed. If they don't buy it today, they may in the future!







# closing the sale

At some point, your customer will be happy with their product (and maybe the perfect partner) and it's time to close the sale. Often the customer will do this for you by thanking you and walking off to pay.

But sometimes customers don't do this and you are left in an awkward moment where you're not quite sure if you're done.

The way to solve this is to ask one more question: "Is there anything else you need today?"

The customer will either say "No" and thank you for your help, or will start to think if there is anything else you can help with. At this point it's almost as if the customer has a shopping list in their head and they will start to work their way down it. As soon as they think of something you might sell, they're bound to ask you for it.

What's great about this technique is you can ask it more than once. Each time you can help them, they carry on down the list until they find something else you might have.

Have you ever come back from shopping and realised that you've forgotten something? If the sales assistant had asked if there was anything else you needed, you probably wouldn't have forgotten it!

## Last impressions count

Imagine if we do all the things we've looked at so far but then the service at the till is so poor that the customer leaves unhappy anyway. What a waste of time and effort that would be.

The experience at the till is likely to be the lasting impression that customers take away with them, so we need to get it right.

There are some simple steps that make all the difference.

1. **Greeting.** Just like when you first met the customer. A "hello", a smile, and eye contact go a long way.
2. **Thank you for waiting.** If there was a queue, thank the customer for waiting. They'll almost always say it was OK and it acknowledges the situation without being negative.
3. **Positive comment.** Saying something nice about the product makes the customer feel good about their purchase – and let's face it, we sell some great things! "That's nice," "I like that colour," or "I've got one of those," are all great – as long as they are sincere.
4. **Pack carefully.** Remember these products now belong to the customer. Look after them and treat them with the care they deserve.
5. **Final check.** Ask: "Did you find everything you were looking for?" Not all our customers know our products as well as we do, so let's make sure they haven't given up because they couldn't find something.
6. **Thank you and goodbye.** Remember the customer has chosen to come in and spend money with us. They didn't have to. Thanking them and saying goodbye is a sure way of seeing them again.





# what do we love and loathe when we go shopping?

At some point in our lives, we are all customers. The things we love to see when we're shopping are the same things our customers love, and we loathe the same things our customers loathe. So it's a good idea to think like a customer and see things the way customers see them.

Think about all the times you've been shopping. What is it about service that you love and loathe? We're not talking about the products or the fixtures or how nice the shop looks - just think about the quality of service you get when you're shopping.



# activity

Based on your experiences as a customer, write down the top five things you love and loathe.

## Things I love

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

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Have a look at your lists and consider them. Where would you prefer to shop?

Next, think about how often you get the service you love, and how often you have to put up with the service you loathe.

Finally, look at the things in the “Things I love” column. You’ll probably find most, if not all, of them come back to the techniques we’ve looked at in this workbook.

## Things I loathe

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Why do you think we experience so much of the service we loathe?

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# training matrix

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Training	Time (Weeks)												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Induction													
Workbook received													
People buy people first and the product second													
Choose your attitude													
Great service gets you the sale													
Get to know your products													
Closing the sale													
What do we love and loathe?													

Learner's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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