

# The Buying Group

## Coaching Questions

### “Who are all your customers?”

#### Topic Introduction

There is rarely only one customer in any decision. For the purchase of cereal, kids influence their parents. For the purchase of a home, the bank and entire family can influence the decision. For the purchase of new computers at a business, all of the employees might have a preference as to what kind of computer they'd like, while finance would have their eye on the budget.

#### Discussion Questions

- Who are all the people that use your product or service?
- Who influences the decision?
- Who pays for it?
- Who is accountable for the decision?

#### Key Learning

When selling your offering, you need to think about all of your customers. Don't forget the ones that you may not see or speak to.

### “What do your customers care about?”

#### Topic Introduction

Now that all of your customers are on your radar, you need to understand their points of view in order to improve your offering and sales techniques.

#### Discussion Questions

- What does the decision maker care about?
- What does the payer care about?
- What does the end user care about?
- What does the gatekeeper care about?

#### Key Learning

Typically each person in the buying group prioritizes things differently. A gatekeeper's priority might be to protect the internal staff from unnecessary interruptions or to help external parties navigate the internal system. Meanwhile, the executive's priority is to make the business competitive. You need to address both priorities to be successful.

### “How do you make sure you address everyone's concern?”

#### Topic Introduction

There is a lot to balance with managing priorities in a buying group. This grows exponentially with the size of the buying group. There are some basic activities that you can consider for business to business buying groups.

#### Discussion Questions

- Do you need to run reports or have some sort of tracking capability?
- Do you need to reduce risk through a performance piece, a payment plan, or other mechanism?
- Do you need to help with implementation, training or communication?

#### Key Learning

The top concerns for a business to business buying group is to reduce risk, improve cash flow, improve the implementation, and increase visibility for management.

## Examples

### Real Life Example: Who are all your customers?

Who are all of the customers involved in an IT software purchase? Not just the IT Manager!

Influencers: CEO, Executive, Partners or customers

End Users: Staff in various departments

Decision Maker: IT Manager

Payer: Finance or Accounting

### Real Life Example: What do your customers care about?

When selling in the transportation industry, if all you worried about was the transportation manager, you would never get a sale. Here are some of the others parties involved and what they care about:

- Shipper: The business that ships out the product. They care that the product is picked up on time and delivered on time.
- Consignee: The business that receives the product. They care that the product arrives undamaged and on time.
- Customs Broker: The business that clears customs if the product crosses a border. They care about getting the paperwork filled out correctly.
- Bill To Party: The business that pays the transportation bill. They care about a low price and good payment terms.
- Consignee's Operations Manager: The manager in charge of the warehouse. They care about shipments arriving on time but also finding space for the product.
- Truck Driver: The person doing the shipment. They care about being paid on time and being unloaded quickly.
- Dispatch: The person communicating with everyone. They care about the right information and contact information for everyone.
- Customer's Receptionist: The person screening the calls. They care about protecting the internal team from unnecessary interruptions.

### Real Life Example: How do you make sure you address everyone's concern?

A commercial cleaner needed to make sure that the building owner, property management company, and customers were happy when they came to the conference centre.

For the building owner, they set up flowers in the front hallway and in the office.

For the property management company, they created checklists to be able to indicate what was done and when, they created a fixed price per month to help with expense management, and then only invoiced once a month to help reduce administration.

For the customers, they added extra amenities into the washroom including mouthwash, hand lotion, and cotton balls. They also put out customer feedback forms for other ideas.

### Mini Case Study

Casey is starting a rotating dental hygiene clinic and wants to know how to make sure he closes a sale.

COACH: "So where are sales at?"

CASEY: "I've been reaching out to property management companies of office buildings to try to get in the door. One of them actually gave me a vacate unit in the office building, but I didn't get a lot of traction."

COACH: "Who else are you speaking to within the building beyond the property management company?"

CASEY: "I put up a sign in the window, so that the building workers know that I'm there."

COACH: "That's a start. But there are other people that might care that you are there. For example, the HR department or executives of the companies in the building, can you think why they might care that you are in the building?"

CASEY: "It would mean that employees wouldn't be taking 3 hours off work for the dentist or even a half day. Maybe I could work with them on integrating it with their benefits. The executives would look at us as a time saver."

COACH: "Now you got it! There are many different people that you need to sell to. And of them cares about different things!"