

**MODULE 2 ENGLISH FOR MANAGEMENT**

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# SALES WORDS AND PHRASES YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST KNOW

# 1. After-sales service

**Meaning:** Regular maintenance (upkeep) or repair of products. After-sales service may be offered by the manufacturer (company who makes the product) or supplier (see below), during and after a warranty (guarantee, see below) period.

**Example:**

“They promised **after-sales service**, but the warranty period was not specified.”

You may want to use this phrase when talking to customers about specific products that may benefit from after-sales service.

# 2. Client

**Meaning:** A person who pays a professional person or organization for services. These services might be from a lawyer, an accountant, advertising agency, etc.

**Example:**

“As an inexperienced employee in an advertising agency, it can be difficult to get new **clients**.”

Clients are generally people who buy more **intangible services** (like advice, or other things you can’t actually see). Pay attention to the difference between this word and the next one.

# 3. Customer

**Meaning:** A person who buys goods or services from a store or other business.

**Example:**

“New **customers** are tough to get in times of financial crisis.”

You may have heard the sayings “the customer is king” or “the customer is always right.” Customers generally appreciate your respect, so you want to let them know that you value their decision to do business with you.

Don’t confuse the word “customer” with the word “client” above. Customers buy **products** and more **tangible services** (like a bank account, an insurance policy or a vacation). If you’re selling products, you’re dealing with customers, not clients.

# 4. Cold calling

**Meaning:** A technique that involves contacting potential (possible) customers who have had no previous contact with the salesperson who is making the call.

**Example:**

“I always get annoyed when a **cold caller** decides to disturb my rest.”

“Cold calling” generally refers to phone calls, but it may also involve door-to-door sales. Cold calling is usually seen as a difficult sales technique because many people dislike being disturbed. It’s difficult to sell something to someone who doesn’t want you to be talking to them.

The opposite is “warm calling,” in which the salesperson has already had some contact with the potential customer, like an email or another conversation.

# 5. Guarantee

**Meaning:** A written assurance that a product will be repaired or replaced if it breaks down. “Guarantee” means almost the same thing as “warranty,” but “guarantee” is a bit wider in meaning. “Warranty” is only used to refer to the written agreement, but you can use “to guarantee” as meaning “to ensure” (that something happens).

**Examples:**

“We offer a two-year **guarantee/warranty** for this phone.”

“I **guarantee** the weather will be fine tomorrow.”

This is a word all customers want to hear. It may help you sell faster and more if you use it a lot, because people like having control over the things they buy.

# 6. To buy in bulk

**Meaning:** To purchase goods in large amounts, usually at a discount.

**Example:**

“We **bulk-buy** office supplies because it’s a lot cheaper.”

People can often be convinced to buy in bulk if you emphasize the lower price. This works especially well for non-perishable food (food you can keep for a longer period of time) or other products that last for a while. When customers buy in bulk, you sell more and they pay less. It’s a win-win (situation where everyone benefits) all the way!

# 7. To buy on credit

**Meaning:** To purchase something and pay for it later, normally with interest (extra paid for the money loaned).

**Example:**

“I usually **buy**a lot**on credit** because I tend to shop on impulse (without planning on it).”

People can often be talked into buying on credit, especially when you’re selling expensive products that are still very good value for money.

# 8. Prospect

**Meaning:** Potential customer or client.

**Example:**

“Salespeople can identify **prospects** by direct mailing, emailing or cold calling.”

You’ll **never** actually call a potential customer a prospect when you talk to them. Customers like to be treated as individuals, not as potential sources of income for you. But you may want to use this word with your sales team, or you may come across it when researching the market.

# 9. Retail

**Meaning:** The selling of goods or services in small quantities to customers.

**Example:**

“**Retail** sales are up three percent from last year.”

If you work as a store assistant, you’ll want to understand the retail process and how buyers think. They want to make sure they get the best deal, but that doesn’t always mean the lowest price. Talk to them and find out what their needs are, and more importantly, what their wants are. Help them make decisions, because it can be tricky for them to decide with so many products to choose from.

# 10. Wholesale

**Meaning:** The sale of large quantities of goods (to retailers or to other wholesalers) at lower prices than in retailing.

**Example:**

“Is that price retail or **wholesale**?”

You may want to play the wholesale card (use wholesale as an advantage for you) when you want to focus on the low price you can offer. Customers are often instantly attracted to products sold at wholesale price.

# 11. Catalog price

**Meaning:** The price shown for a product in a catalog, before any money is taken off or added (the cost of packing and shipping, for example).

**Example:**

“This product is sold at 10% less than the **catalog price**.”

Customers like being given discounts from the catalog price. You may want to use this to your advantage if you think the price might seem too high to them.

# 12. Agreed price

**Meaning:** Price which has been accepted by the buyer and seller.

**Example:**

“I was so disappointed that they suddenly increased the **agreed price***.”*

How to use this in sales: Some salespeople can have a bad reputation for raising agreed prices, or “gazumping” (a term used mainly in British English). Sometimes they even lower prices at the last minute to secure a sale (“gazundering*,*“also used in British English). While customers may like the last one, pay attention not to be tricked into gazundering.

# 13. Bargain

**Meaning:** A product bought or offered for sale at a much lower price than is expected.

**Example:**

“The laptop was a real **bargain**.”

Telling customers that a certain product is a bargain may win them over. You’ll want to present it as a good “price/quality ratio” (see below), and not just as something cheap.

# 14. Payment by installments

**Meaning:** A system by which a buyer pays for a product in stages (rather than all at once), while being able to use it.

**Example:**

“We couldn’t afford a washing machine at that point, so we **paid**for it**in installments**.”

As a salesperson, you’ll have to be able to explain details to a customer wishing to buy in installments: During the repayment period, the buyer is not the owner of the product. When they finally finish paying for it, the ownership passes to the buyer. This can be thought of as an advantage because the customer can use a product they haven’t paid for yet.

# 15. Advance payment

**Meaning:** A system by which a customer pays part of the price of a product ahead of time. The balance (the remaining amount) is to be paid when the product is delivered.

**Example:**

“We require **advance payment** for this car, as it is custom-made.”

Advance payment is used as a guarantee that customers will pay at a later date when they get the product. Some may be reluctant to give money in advance, but you can explain that this is a system in which they can be certain they will receive the exact product they ordered. You’ll have to make sure they understand that they will only be billed the remaining amount when they get the product.

# 16. Price conscious

**Meaning:** Seeking the lowest prices.

**Example:**

“She was so **price conscious** that she kept looking for the best deal until the product wasn’t available anymore.”

Price conscious customers are tricky to sell to because they will always look for a better deal. The best way to get them to buy from you is to convince them that their purchase is only valuable if they look for quality as well.

# 17. Price reduction

**Meaning:** A lowering of the price of goods.

**Example:**

“After the huge **price reduction**, everybody wanted to buy the new model.”

Price reductions almost make products sell themselves. However, some customers who are normally willing to spend more can become suspicious if a product is too cheap. They may consider it not good enough for them. At this point, you’ll have to emphasize the best qualities of the product.

# 18. Sales pitch

**Meaning:** A sales presentation that tries to persuade someone to buy a product.

**Example:**

“Her **sales pitch** was so good that it convinced almost everyone in the room.”

It’s good to have a sales pitch, but pay attention to your voice. Customers don’t like it when you learn sentences by heart (memorize them) and deliver them like a robot. You should [make a presentation](https://www.fluentu.com/english/business/blog/business-english-presentation-graphics/) that is more personal, so that they actually believe what you’re saying.

# 19. Price/quality ratio

**Meaning:** A product’s ability to deliver performance for its price.

**Example:**

“This product has such a good **price/quality ratio** that I simply have to have it.”

When customers are not immediately drawn to a product because it’s on sale, the card you must play is the price/quality ratio card (you can count on this argument). This doesn’t mean that a product is cheap, it means that you pay an amount that is fair for what it’s worth. When a product has a good price/quality ratio, it means it has great quality for a reasonable price. A less technical way to say this is that a product is “great value for the money.”

# 20. Quote/Quotation

**Meaning:** A formal statement setting out the estimated cost for a particular product or service.

**Example:**

“This company gave us the lowest **quote*,*** so we chose them.”

A quote or quotation is a formal document that you can give to prospective (possible) customers to inform them about the price you can offer. It may also contain the terms of sale and payment. If a buyer accepts the quote, this represents an agreement to buy the product.

# 21. Faulty goods

**Meaning:** Defective goods, imperfect products.

**Example:**

“Their bad reputation was a result of having sold several **faulty goods**.”

When dealing with customers who have purchased faulty goods from you, you have to try to put yourself in their shoes (imagine yourself in their situation) so that you can be truly helpful. If there’s warranty coverage, helping them will probably be easier. If there isn’t, you’ll have to make sure you only promise to do what your company can do for that customer.

# 22. Complimentary gift

**Meaning:** A free gift offered to you when you purchase something or when you visit a store.

**Example:**

“She received a **complimentary gift** on her purchase and was very pleased.”

Everybody loves free stuff! Once word gets around that you offer free gifts, your sales may suddenly go through the roof.

# 23. Free trial

**Meaning:** A product or service that is offered to customers for free for a short period of time so that they can try using it.

**Example:**

“A **free trial** was available for that laptop. In the end, I liked it so much that I bought it.”

Customers like to try out things for free. It’s a good way to start a connection with them and even to try to sell them other related products.

# 24. To submit an invoice

**Meaning:** To send or give a bill for a purchase.

**Example:**

“They **submitted** the **invoice** late, so I assumed the product wouldn’t arrive on time.”

Be sure not to talk about payment documents before the customer is fully convinced, as this may make you look too eager and unprofessional. Invoices are official documents that are very important, but only talk about them after you’ve closed the deal (see below).

# 25. Recommended price

**Meaning:** The price at which a manufacturer suggests a product should be sold. This price may be changed by the retailer.

**Example:**

“Retailers who sell this model for more than the **recommended price** are counting on uninformed customers.”

You should know if there’s a recommended price for the products you’re selling, and have an explanation ready if your price is different.

# 26. Terms of payment

**Meaning:** Conditions of payment agreed on by the buyer and seller for goods or services.

**Example:**

“I really wanted to buy the product, but the **terms of payment** were worse than I expected: They accepted cash only.”

Once the customer has made up their mind and is willing to buy a product, you have to discuss the terms of payment. These may include:

* How long the buyer has to pay the amount due.
* Whether they have to pay in advance (before they get the product).
* Whether you require cash on delivery (full payment when the goods are handed over) or accept deferred payment (let the customer pay later).

# 27. Sales target

**Meaning:** A goal set for a salesperson.

**Example:**

“The **sales target** was so high this month that nobody in the team managed to reach it.”

Your sales target is your personal mission (assignment), and you should think of it as a motivation to sell more. In times of recession (economic crisis), sales targets can be discouraging, as it’s difficult to reach them. However, in times of economic growth, you may even exceed (go over) your sales target!

# 28. Sales volume

**Meaning:** The amount of goods or services sold by a company in a specified period.

**Example:**

“Good sales reps can help increase the **sales volume**.”

Sales volume is one of the key factors in how successful a company is. To increase sales volume, a company must make sure its salespeople are motivated and take care of a lot of other essentials like [a marketing plan](https://www.fluentu.com/english/business/blog/business-english-marketing/), advertising and customer care, to name just a few.

# 29. Supplier

**Meaning:** A person or company that provides goods or services.

**Example:**

“We stopped working with our **supplier** because he was late delivering the products.”

A good supplier needs to communicate well and be flexible. They must also be reliable and have good prices.

# 30. To close the sale

**Meaning:** To complete the transaction, to close the deal.

**Example:**

“Jack was very good at presenting products, but he simply couldn’t **close a sale**.”

Closing is very important in sales. Without closing, you have pretty much wasted your time. You have an informed customer who will probably be buying from somewhere else. In order to close a deal, you need to help the customer make a decision.

customers you just haven’t had a chance to win over yet. People never have time to listen to long sales presentations, so it’s essential to assure them that you’ll be brief. You can use the following two introductions for that.

31. I’m sure you’re quite busy at the moment, so I’ll be very brief.

32. I won’t take very much of your time.

Once you have their attention, it’s a good idea to involve them in what you’re saying, so ask them questions. They will probably answer. Here are a couple ways to start:

33. Would you be interested in…?

34. With your permission, I’d like to ask you some questions.

You can maximize the time they give you by being brief. That may sound strange, because you might think that the longer you have, the better your chances are at selling.

However, as we’ve talked about, customers don’t have a lot of time to listen to you and they can be reluctant at first. So by being brief, you actually show them you respect them and the time they give you. Here are some phrases you could use to help you structure your pitch:

35. The two most important things to remember are…

36. The best feature of the product is…

37. When I first started using this…

38. The price of this product is unbeatable.

Customers like it when you take care of them. They will be returning to you if you give them the feeling that you’re doing your best to meet their needs. Here are a few wonder sentences to bring across the feeling that you’re there for them no matter what:

39. Let me take care of that for you.

40. I’d be happy to solve this for you.

41. I’ll send you an update by…

42. I appreciate your business.

43. I know you’ve been a customer for a long time and your loyalty is important to us.

44. I really appreciate you letting us know.

45. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Now to practice the words and phrases from above, try filling in the gaps with one of the options provided. Then check your answers with the key at the end.

1. She works in a bank, but it’s not her job to talk \_\_\_ into taking loans. (**clients, customers, prospects**)

2. They couldn’t afford the product, so they decided to \_\_\_. (**buy in bulk, buy on credit, close the deal**)

3. Being a new store assistant, John didn’t know the \_\_\_ yet. (**catalog price, agreed price, advance payment**)

4. The customer already knew the \_\_\_, so they didn’t want to spend more. (**complimentary gift, recommended price, sales target**)

5. This is the best \_\_\_ you’re going to get. (**price/quality ratio, faulty goods, sales target**)

6. Customer: I’m really disappointed with this product! I want it replaced for free right now!

Salesperson:

**a)** I know you’ve been a customer for a long time and your loyalty is important to us.

**b)** I appreciate your business.

**c)** I’d be happy to solve this for you.

7. Customer: I’m not sure if this is the product I want.

Salesperson:

**a)** When I first started using this…

**b)** I won’t take very much of your time.

**c)** I’ll send you an update by…

8. Salesperson (cold calling): Hello, I’m Jane from [company name], could I talk to you about our new product?

Customer (annoyed): Sorry, I’m a bit busy right now…

Salesperson:

**a)** Would you be interested in…

**b)** I’m sure you’re quite busy at the moment, so I’ll be very brief.

**c)** The best feature of the product is…

Now use the key below to check your answers.

**customers**

**buy on credit**

**catalog price**

**recommended price**

**price/quality ratio**

**c**(a and b might also work as an introduction, after which the salesperson should get into details about the problem)

**a**

**b**