Guide 10: Build customer relationships

Unit 2, Task 2

Your goal

Plan how to attract your target customers and build a relationship with them. Choose a sales tactic that gives customers an honest reason to consider your product.

Getting attention is only a start. A business also needs to deliver what it promises, respond to problems, and give customers a reason to trust it.

What to produce

Create a plan to build customer relationships. Include the sales tactic or tactics you will use to attract customers.

Explain how the plan fits your target customer and how you could check whether it works. The planning prompts below are support, not extra official requirements. Save the work on paper or in your own document.

Key terms

- **Customer acquisition:** attracting people who become customers.
- **Customer retention:** keeping customers over time.
- **Sales tactic:** a specific action used to encourage a purchase.
- **Persuasion:** influencing a choice through a message or action.
- **Hypothesis:** a prediction that you can check with evidence.

Some products are bought often; others last for years. A durable product may build relationships through helpful service, recommendations, or later purchases. Do not assume that every business needs a points scheme or frequent repeat sales.

Step 1: Start with the customer

Read your customer profile. What would help this person notice, understand, and trust the product? What might prevent a purchase?

Use your research rather than guessing. A customer who needs to see the product work may value a demonstration more than a discount.

Step 2: Choose a sales tactic

Link the tactic to a principle of persuasion you have studied. For example:

- **Social proof:** people may consider what other people choose or recommend. Use only genuine reviews or customer comments, with permission.
- **Reciprocity:** receiving something of value can make people feel they should return the favour. A business might offer useful advice or a free sample. Customers must remain free to say no.
- **Scarcity:** a genuinely limited supply can affect a decision. Never invent low stock or a false deadline.

Explain the connection: “This tactic may help because ____.” A principle is a possible explanation, not a guarantee that customers will buy.

Step 3: Plan the relationship after a sale

Choose actions that fit your product and resources. These might include clear care instructions, reliable delivery, a fair response to faults, or a way to ask for help.

State who will do each action and what it will cost in time or money. Avoid promises you cannot keep. If you plan to contact customers later, follow your teacher's guidance on permission and privacy.

Step 4: Plan how to check the tactic

Turn your main assumption into a testable prediction. Decide what customers would say or do if the tactic helps.

You could use an interview, a small focus group, or an A/B test. A focus group discusses an idea together. An A/B test compares two versions while keeping other important conditions similar.

For example, show a demonstration to one group and a feature description to another. Give both groups the same product and price information. Ask what they understood and what questions remain. Interest is not the same as a sale.

Use any feedback you collect to improve the plan. Record a planned test as planned until you have actually done it.

Example: Ready Pouch

Ready Pouch is our fictional example business. Its proposed product is a small pencil pouch for students.

This is a fictional planning example, not evidence that a tactic works.

Ready Pouch plans to offer a free tip sheet on organising school supplies. The team links this useful help to reciprocity: some people may feel a wish to return the favour by considering the business. The sheet must be useful even to people who do not buy anything.

After a sale, the team would provide care instructions and a clear way to report a faulty zip. It rejects a weekly buying reward because customers are unlikely to need a new pouch each week.

The team predicts that offering the sheet will lead more people to request product information than a product message alone. It plans a fair comparison. Until that test happens, it cannot claim more requests or sales. Even a difference would not prove why each person responded.

Your turn

Describe:

1. A barrier that could stop your target customer buying.
2. Your sales tactic and the persuasion principle behind it.
3. Your plan to build trust after the sale.
4. The people, time, and money needed to carry out the plan.
5. A prediction and a fair way to test it.

If you have already tested a tactic, record the actual findings and what changed. Feedback that challenges your tactic can improve the plan.

Check your work

- My tactic fits the customer profile.
- I explained how persuasion relates to the tactic.
- My claims, reviews, and deadlines are honest.
- My relationship plan is realistic for this product.
- I separated completed findings from planned tests.

Next: Research customer preferences

In Unit 2, Task 3, test an assumption about the features or experience your customers want.

Independent guidance based on the AP Business with Personal Finance CED, printed pages 161-162. This is not an official College Board resource.