

# **BSBPRO301 Recommend Products and Services - Resource**



**BSB30115 Certificate  
III in Business**







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# COURSE INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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This learner guide covers one unit of competency that is part of the BSB30115 Certificate III in Business Training Package:

BSBPRO301 Recommend products and services

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to provide advice and information within an organisation about the development and distribution of its products and services.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of endorsement.

This unit applies to individuals who are skilled operators and apply a broad range of competencies in various work contexts. They may exercise discretion and judgement using appropriate knowledge of products and services to provide technical advice and support to a team.

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## ABOUT ASSESSMENT

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This guide contains a range of learning activities which support you in developing your competence. To apply this knowledge to your assessment you will be required to complete the assessment tools that are included in your program. The assessment is a competency based assessment, which has no pass or fail; you are either competent or not yet competent. This means that you still are in the process of understanding and acquiring the skills and knowledge required to be marked competent.

For valid and reliable assessment of this unit, a range of assessment methods will be used to assess practical skills and knowledge.



Your assessment may be conducted through a combination of the following methods:

- Third-party reports from a supervisor
- Practical demonstration of your skills in a classroom situation
- Projects and assignments
- Portfolio of evidence
- Written or verbal questioning to assess knowledge and understanding of business policies and procedures
- Oral presentation
- A combination of these methods

The assessment tool for this unit should be completed within the specified time period following the delivery of the unit. If you feel you are not yet ready for assessment, discuss this with your trainer.

To be successful in this unit you will need to be able to join you're learning to your work place, this should be achievable for those who are employed and for those who are not yet employed and you will be required to use observations of examples that can take place in a workplace environment.



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# ELEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Develop and maintain knowledge of products and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1. Actively and regularly research knowledge and understanding of industry products and services using authoritative sources</li><li>1.2. Use available product and service documentation to identify and understand characteristics of products and services, and to make comparisons with other products and services</li><li>1.3. Accurately document and maintain information on products and services in a format consistent with organisational requirements</li><li>1.4. Apply acquired knowledge to improve quality within personal work areas</li></ul>                             |
| 2. Recommend products and services                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1. Ensure that recommendations on products and services are in line with organisational requirements</li><li>2.2. Provide recommendations that emphasise product and service issues relevant to client needs</li><li>2.3. Ensure that evidence in support of recommendations is verifiable and presented in a suitable format</li><li>2.4. Structure recommendations to identify clear benefits to clients and the organisation</li></ul>  |
| 3. Advise on promotional activities                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3.1. Provide advice that is clear, is supported by verifiable evidence and is compatible with organisational requirements</li><li>3.2. Ensure that promotional documentation and materials are appropriate to presentation of the organisation's products and services</li><li>3.3. Ensure that costs of promotional activities conform to budget resources</li><li>3.4. Estimate impact of promotional activities from verifiable customer feedback sources</li><li>3.5. Evaluate the benefits of promotional activities and incorporate in plans for future promotional activities</li></ul> |



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# REQUIRED SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

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This describes the essential knowledge and skills and their level required for this unit.

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## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE

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- Key provisions of relevant legislation from all levels of government that may affect aspects of business operations, such as:
  - Anti-discrimination legislation
  - Ethical principles
  - Codes of practice
  - Privacy laws
  - Occupational health and safety (OHS)
- Organisation's products and services
- Organisational policies and procedures for customer service including handling customer complaints
- Product and service standards and best practice models
- Principles and techniques of public relations and product promotion
- Mechanisms to obtain and analyse customer feedback

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## REQUIRED SKILLS

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- Literacy skills to read and understand a variety of texts; to prepare general information and papers according to target audience; and to edit and proofread texts to ensure clarity of meaning, and accuracy of grammar and punctuation
- Technology skills to select and use technology appropriate to a task
- Communication skills to monitor and advise on customer service strategies
- Problem-solving skills to deal with customer enquiries or complaints
- Analytical skills to identify trends and positions of products and services



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# EVIDENCE GUIDE

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The evidence guide provides advice on assessment and must be read in conjunction with the performance criteria, required knowledge and skills, the range statement and the assessment guidelines for this Training Package.

## **Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit**

Evidence of the following is essential:

- Assessing and reporting on customer satisfaction
- Identifying commercial characteristics of products and services
- Knowledge of product and service standards and best practice models.
- Preparing and structuring advice on products and services
- Researching market availability of products and services

## **Context of and specific resources for assessment**

Assessment must ensure:

- Access to an actual workplace or simulated environment
- Access to office equipment and resources
- Examples of promotional strategies
- Examples of documents relating to customer service standards and policies

## **Method of assessment**

A range of assessment methods should be used to assess practical skills and knowledge. The following examples are appropriate for this unit:

- Analysis of responses to case studies and scenarios
- Assessment of written reports
- Demonstration of techniques
- Direct questioning combined with review of portfolios of evidence and third party workplace reports of on-the-job performance by the candidate
- Evaluation of promotional activities plans
- Observation of performance in role plays
- Observation of presentations
- Oral or written questioning to assess knowledge of promotional strategies and sources of product information
- Review of documentation outlining



- information on products and services
- Review of products and services recommendations

**Guidance information for assessment**

Holistic assessment with other units relevant to the industry sector, workplace and job role is recommended, for example:

- Sales and/or customer service units

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## PRE-REQUISITES

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This unit must be assessed after the following pre-requisite unit:

There are no pre-requisites for this unit.



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# TOPIC 1 – DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN KNOWLEDGE OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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## ACTIVELY AND REGULARLY RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF INDUSTRY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES USING AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

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### WHY HAVE PRODUCT AND SERVICE KNOWLEDGE?

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With the wide range of products and services available to customers, you need to have good product knowledge to keep up with your customers' needs.

Customers are likely to be aware of specialised product ranges, and they will make comparisons between the features of different products and services. Smart customers are also shopping around for the retailer that offers a competitive price and service.

Selling specialised products and services is like a "higher level" skill - your customers will need expert advice and will rely on you to be able to recommend the most suitable product from your range.

To be successful as a sales person, you will need to be aware of the features and benefits offered by the specialised products in your business.

### IDENTIFY PRODUCT AND SERVICE RANGE

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You will also need to be able to promote the products and services offered by your business and influence the customer to make a buying choice with you rather than your competitors.

By establishing techniques and strategies to continually develop your product knowledge, you will be able to offer your customers the very best service and sales advice possible.



You will need to ensure you have a full knowledge of the products and services your business offers, where they are located in the business and in particular the products that you will be selling in your department. If you have this knowledge you will be in the best place to ensure you can assist your customers with a minimum of fuss.



### DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE OF PRODUCTS FEATURES AND BENEFITS

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Knowledge is power and for retailers, product knowledge can mean more sales. It is difficult to effectively sell to a consumer if we cannot show how a particular product will address a purchaser's needs. Read on to learn some of the benefits of knowing the products you sell.

### STRENGTHENS COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Having a thorough understanding of the products on the shelves can allow a retailer to use different techniques and methods of presenting the product to customers. Stronger communication skills will allow a salesperson to recognize and adapt a sales presentation for the various types of customers.

### BOOSTS ENTHUSIASM

Seeing someone completely enthusiastic about a product is one of the best-selling tools. As you generate excitement for the product, you remove any uncertainty the product may not be the best solution for that customer. The easiest way to become enthusiastic is to truly believe in the product.



## GROWS CONFIDENCE

If a customer isn't fully committed to completing a sale, the difference may simply be the presence (or lack) of confidence a salesperson has towards the product. Becoming educated in the product and its uses will help cement that confidence.

## ASSISTS IN OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Objections made by customers may be struck down with factual information regarding the product. That information usually comes in the form of product knowledge. Being well versed in not only your products, but similar products sold by competitors, allows you to easily counter objections.

Developing product knowledge is as simple as research

## HOW TO GAIN PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

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- Marketing Literature
- Sales Reps
- Training Sessions
- Testimonials
- Role Playing
- Practical Use

It is important to understand how the product is made, the value of the product, how the product should and can be used, and what products work well together.



Product knowledge is an essential sales skill. Understanding your products' features allows you to present their benefits accurately and persuasively. Customers respond to enthusiastic sales staff who are passionate about their products and eager to share the benefits with them.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES

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Customers are more likely to trust sales people who show confidence in themselves and what they are selling. You can build this confidence by increasing your knowledge of your products or services.



Use conventional and creative sources of information to learn about your products or services, including:

- Your own experiences using the products
- Product literature such as brochures and catalogues
- Feedback from customers
- Trade and industry publications
- Internal sales records
- Your team members
- Visits to manufacturers
- Sales training programs
- Competitor information

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### TURN PRODUCT FEATURES INTO BENEFITS

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As you engage customers, you can use your knowledge to lead your customer through the sales process, and make their experience an enjoyable one that they'll want to revisit.

Successful salespeople know all of their products' features and skilfully turn these features into benefits for their customers.

To practice this skill, list your product's features, potential benefits, and all information up front for your customers. Consider how you can communicate the potential benefits, for example:

- Product features - Possible benefits for your customer
- Its purpose - It will meet your needs and save you time and money
- How it works - It is easy to use so you won't be frustrated by complicated features
- How it is developed or manufactured - It supports local industry and helps the environment
- How it is checked for quality - You can be confident it will work
- How it is delivered - You don't have to worry about delivery; we organise that for you
- How it is maintained and serviced - You can be assured that if it needs maintenance, we will take care of it for you
- How long it is likely to last (including any warranties) - You can be confident that if it has any problems we will fix it or replace it while under warranty
- Its price - You can comfortably afford it



- How it compares to similar products the business offers - You can base your decision on the good reputation our business has earned for selling other well-regarded products
- How it compares to competitors' products - You are receiving quality and value for money
- Its strengths and limitations (the capability of the product to deliver benefits to clients) - You are buying a product that is well-matched to your particular needs
- Other products that might complement it - Buying this companion product will allow you to meet the needs of your entire household

### Activity 1.1

Review the sales skills page

at <http://www.business.qld.gov.au/business/running/sales-customer-service/sales-skills> and follow the links to the other 5 guides on Creating good first impressions, verbal communication skills for selling, non-verbal communication skills for selling, building customer relationships when selling and knowing your products and services. What 5 items mentioned in these guides are your greatest weaknesses?

### Activity 1.2

Choose a product from your organisation or another business in which you are interested. List 5 pieces of information that you would need to know before you could recommend it to a client.

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR PRODUCTS

There are many things you will need to know about your products and services. Some of these include:

- Pricing structure
- Styles, colours or models available
- History of the product
- Any special manufacturing process
- How to use the product
- Product distribution and delivery
- Servicing, warranty and repair information



It may take a while to easily develop your product knowledge, especially with new products, but over time you'll become comfortable and confident in providing the correct information to shoppers. That confidence will pay off in improved sales results. Authoritative sources are any source of information that can be declared as authentic and genuine by determining whether it has been acknowledged by others, is well known and/or known experts in their field. These sources may include:



- Authorised suppliers
- Industry associations
- Industry conferences
- Recognised industry media sources



## Self-Test 1.1

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

**Understanding, knowledge, benefits, enthusiastic, products**

Product \_\_\_\_\_ is an essential sales skill. \_\_\_\_\_ your products' features allows you to present their \_\_\_\_\_ accurately and persuasively. Customers respond to \_\_\_\_\_ sales staff who are passionate about their \_\_\_\_\_ and eager to share the benefits with them.

## Self-Test 1.2

Which of these are not authoritative sources?

- ☐ Authorised suppliers
- ☐ Industry associations
- ☐ Industry conferences
- ☐ Friends and relatives

## USE AVAILABLE PRODUCT AND SERVICE DOCUMENTATION TO IDENTIFY AND UNDERSTAND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, AND TO MAKE COMPARISONS WITH OTHER PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Product and service documents are comprehensive documents that provide information on all products and services that are provided by your company. This documentation is available for access by staff to allow them to compare products/services in your inventory for clients to help find the best deal for them.

By comparing your products and services with each other, you can provide information to the clients on what is available to them, what their options are and make a recommendation based on this comparison.

Some product and service documentation may include:

- Colleagues' knowledge
- Consumer reports
- Industry reports
- Marketing data
- Operational guidelines
- Sales figures
- User manuals





- Product/service specifications

Another useful feature of comparing products and services is to gain the ability to understand characteristics and benefits of each product. An excellent way of summarising comparisons is to record the products and their characteristics in a table.

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### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRODUCT/SERVICE

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The characteristics of the product or service are the features and elements that differentiate it from others that are available on the market. These characteristics help determine the marketing mix, potential target market and the pricing of a product or service.

Your products/services need to differentiate themselves in the market and carry distinct characteristics that separate them from their competitors. Otherwise, there would be no reason for clients to purchase one of your products or services over any others that are on the market.

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### DETERMINING THE MARKETING MIX

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When companies create a new product/service they will have specific features in mind. These could be characteristics that would improve on an existing product or service or ones that help with a currently unfilled need. Companies spend a lot of time and money on market research to understand its needs and how their product would fit into the market to fulfil the current needs.

Characteristics of the product or service also help to determine its price. Some high end features will increase the price, while low-end features could decrease it. This can determine where a product may fall on the price index. It is the combination of demand for a product and its price that help determine the marketing mix.

#### Activity 1.3

If you have an interest in marketing, go to <https://www.boundless.com/marketing/integrated-marketing-communication/selecting-the-promotion-mix-for-a-particular-product/characteristics-of-the-product/> - particularly Chapter 1 “An Overview of Marketing”. What could your organisation do better to recommend their products to customers?

#### Self-Test 1.3



What information can you provide by comparing your products/service? You may choose more than one.

- ☐ What is available to them
- ☐ What their options are
- ☐ Make a recommendation based on this comparison
- ☐ Determine the price

#### Self-Test 1.4

Your products/services need to differentiate themselves in the market and carry distinct characteristics that separate them from their competitors.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

#### Activity 1.4

Choose a car or a home appliance that you would like to buy. Identify at least 3 different models. Compare the products key characteristics using a table that you have created.

### ACCURATELY DOCUMENT AND MAINTAIN INFORMATION ON PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN A FORMAT CONSISTENT WITH ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

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Once you have begun collecting information and knowledge on your business' products and services, you will need to consider how all of this information is going to be documented and stored.

Due to the fact that you will be required to retrieve this information to allow you to make recommendations for clients, it stands to reason that you will need to plan ahead on how you are going to store it all. If your business has an organisational requirement in place that details how to store and retrieve information, then you will need to ensure that you are familiar with this and that you can follow the requirements that are in place accurately.

Should the organisation not have a requirement set out for this, then you should set up a storage plan that works for your needs.



Information that you will need to document and store may include:

- Competitive features of products or services
- Cost and production data
- Distribution processes
- Innovations
- Problems with products or services
- Product trends
- Sales records (monthly forecasts, targets achieved)
- Sales trends

### WHY KEEP THIS INFORMATION?

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Your workplace is responsible for the safe and secure storage of its documents and records. The organisational requirements of your workplace will support the procedures for documenting and storing the information.

There are several reasons for keeping this information and among them are:

- Legal and legislative purposes
- To provide information to clients about your products/services
- The ability to compare documents with each other
- To allow you to create estimated forecasts of sales trends
- To review past sales results
- To allow for information to be obtained in the event of troubleshooting



Another upside to having a secure storage system in place for your documentation is that it can present the opportunity to safeguard any confidential information about clients or workers, such as addresses, D.O.B (Date of Birth), financial information etc.

Workplace policies and procedures for storage and access of information provide a guide for workers to follow, and if you are conscientious in adhering to these, information can be kept secure and in good order, and will be easily accessible to those who need it.



### Self-Test 1.5

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

**Organisational, responsible, procedures, storage**

Your workplace is \_\_\_\_\_ for the safe and secure of its \_\_\_\_\_ documents and records. The \_\_\_\_\_ requirements of your workplace will support the \_\_\_\_\_ for documenting and storing the information.

### Self-Test 1.6

Which of these sources of information on products and services needs to be kept?

- ☐ Cost and production data
- ☐ Distribution processes
- ☐ Sales records
- ☐ All of the above

## APPLY ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE QUALITY WITHIN PERSONAL WORK AREAS

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Product knowledge is one of the keys to increasing sales and maximising profits. Unless the staff learn as much as they can about the products/services your business offers, it would be difficult for them to see the value in those products and why customers would need them. This is where product knowledge training comes in.

Unless staff take the initiative to learn about the products themselves, the business owner or manager must help them increase their product knowledge. This can be done by:

- Making sure staff read all of the available product information
- Allowing staff to use the products so they can try the features for themselves and work out how your products meet customers' needs
- Maximising supplier representatives as a knowledge resource on the products they should know best; ensuring that supplier representatives are utilised to increase staff product knowledge
- Conducting regular training sessions



Staff must know basic information such as the models, styles and colours available, servicing, repair and warranty details, distribution and delivery, if applicable, how and where the product was made, and their prices. More importantly, they need to understand the value of the products, how to use them, and be able to effectively demonstrate them to customers.<sup>1</sup>



Assisting customers with their purchases would most likely be the major factor regarding product knowledge training. As discussed earlier in this topic, customers will respond

better towards a staff member who has a high product knowledge, thus showing they do actually know what they are selling, then towards a staff member who is unable to provide them with the answers they seek.

A final point to remember is that no matter how good your products or services are, their success, and in direct correlation your business' success, depends entirely on how well you and your staff are able to sell them to your customers.

#### Self-Test 1.7

Staff member product knowledge makes little difference to customers.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.keyba.com.au/blog/boost-product-knowledge-increase-sales/>



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## TOPIC 2 - RECOMMEND PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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### ENSURE THAT RECOMMENDATIONS ON PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ARE IN LINE WITH ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND EMPHASISE PRODUCT AND SERVICE ISSUES RELEVANT TO CLIENT NEEDS

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The importance of effective product recommendations cannot be ignored. When done correctly they can heavily contribute to the success of a business, both by increasing the quantity and the size of purchases and orders being placed.

Studies have revealed that, when recommendations are made intelligently, those products being recommended can enjoy conversion rates over 900% higher than average. Yet many businesses still struggle to implement effective product recommendation systems.

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### THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

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For product recommendations to work effectively, the system in place needs to really know your customer. Your business must identify what these people are likely to want and need and address it.

Context is the key factor here – showing useful recommendations at the most appropriate point in the buying process.

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### CONTEXT IS KEY

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Business owners and marketers frequently throw recommendations around without fully considering what a customer really wants at that given moment.

Take the example below – a musical instrument retailer. Let's say you are on their site shopping for a guitar, and you see a model that takes your interest. At this point in the buying process you are considering what *guitar* you wish to purchase, nothing else.



However, the ‘Customers also bought’ section is recommending products that you aren’t (yet) looking for – in this case a guitar stand, a tuner and plectrums. These may actually be *damaging* the website’s conversion rate, by distracting a customer’s attention from the task at hand (shopping for a guitar) and pulling them out of the ‘guitar’ buying process.

Only after the customer makes his or her decision to buy should the website switch to recommending complementary products. The obvious way to identify that key event is when the customer adds a product to their shopping cart.

At this initial stage in the buying process the site should instead be assisting you in your task of finding a *guitar*. Consequently, recommendations in this context should be other guitars of a similar style, colour, price point, or whatever factors play an important role in the decision to buy. That way, if the model you are looking at here isn’t quite right, the recommendation engine may prevent a lost sale by pointing you in the direction of an alternate product that is right.<sup>2</sup>



This same concept can be applied to a brick and mortar establishment. By positioning display racks of items nearby the related main products on the shelves, you may be able to encourage some extra sales by clients purchasing these additional supplements.

Another tactic is to use “End Caps”. These are displays at the end of each aisle or counter that are designed to catch a customer’s eye and produce more sales. They allow businesses to generate significant incremental sales by creating product awareness and encouraging impulse purchases.

Your organisation should have requirements about the selling techniques that you are allowed to use. These requirements can include sales and service techniques, credit terms, allowable discounts and legislative requirements.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.smartinsights.com/ecommerce/merchandising/product-recommendations-websites-wrong/>



## Self-Test 2.1

The most important thing to consider when using recommendations is:

- ☐ The highest price you can sell for
- ☐ Making the display attractive
- ☐ Selling the customer additional product
- ☐ The wants and needs of the client

## Self-Test 2.2

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

Need, recommendations, identify, system

For product \_\_\_\_\_ to work effectively, the \_\_\_\_\_ in place needs to really know your customer. Your business must \_\_\_\_\_ what these people are likely to want and \_\_\_\_\_ and address it.

**ENSURE THAT EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF RECOMMENDATIONS  
IS VERIFIABLE AND PRESENTED IN A SUITABLE FORMAT AND  
STRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS TO IDENTIFY CLEAR  
BENEFITS TO CLIENTS AND THE ORGANISATION**

### HOW DO YOU MATCH NEEDS TO PRODUCTS?

During the sales discussion you are building up a mental picture of the product that is going to best suit your customer's needs. Your product knowledge will help you do this. Sometimes, you arrive at the most suitable product by a process of elimination. For example, your customer is looking for curtains, and has told you that she doesn't like dark colours or floral prints. So you know that she isn't going to be interested in a certain range of curtains that you offer, simply because they won't match her needs. Therefore you can eliminate those products, and focus on others.



### DEMONSTRATE FEATURES AND BENEFITS



Every product you sell has its own set of features. Features of a product can be defined as:

- The characteristics of a product - things you can see, smell, hear, touch or taste.

Typically, features include things like the warranty, the price or what the product actually does. Usually, features are easy to identify because they are written on the packaging, or the product itself.

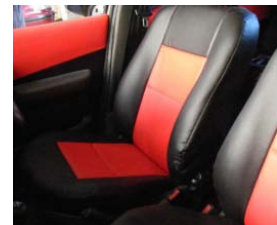


If you were selling a car, naturally you would want your customers to know about all the great features it has... but they will be more interested in knowing what these features will actually do for them - that is, what are the benefits?

You are considering buying this new car. Think about the first feature - the leather seats. Ok... the car has leather seats. So what? As a customer, when you ask the question "so what?" you really mean "what will that do for me?" In other words, what you mean is "what benefit does that give me?"

What would be the benefit or benefits of leather seats in your new car? They could include:

- Comfortable to sit in
- Hard-wearing
- Great looking
- Long lasting
- Prestigious



If you were selling this car, how would you know which of the above benefits are going to appeal to your customer? To work this out, you need to know the difference between rational benefits, and emotional benefits. You also need to be aware of the priority ranking customers use - what is most important to them?



## RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL BENEFITS

There is quite a difference between rational benefits and emotional benefits.

It might help you to think of them this way:

- Rational benefits come from the head
- Emotional benefits come from the heart

For example, with the leather seats in your new sports car:

- The rational benefit would be that they are hard wearing and long lasting - very sensible
- The emotional benefit would be that they are soft and comfortable - very nice

Generally, people buy for emotional rather than rational reasons.

- Rational benefits are quite straightforward - they are usually specific and will appeal to the majority of customers
- Emotional benefits, however, are not that easy - because every customer is different

One way of determining your customer's emotional and rational needs is to simply ask! The best way to ask is with an open question - for example, "What are you looking for in your new car?" Customers will usually be happy to tell you.

Finally, you need to remember that emotional needs can be sensitive. Unless customers feel that they can trust you, they may not give you the full story about their needs.

For example, a man with thinning hair may be buying a hat because he wants to cover up his baldness - maybe he's embarrassed about it. He doesn't really have a rational need for the hat - his needs are purely emotional - he may feel that wearing a hat will make him more attractive. Obviously, this is quite personal and he may not wish to share these feelings with you. Keep an eye on your customer's body language and facial expressions - you will soon know if they are becoming uncomfortable.

## SELLING BENEFITS



## SELLING ISN'T BUYING

Selling a product or service is about listening to your customers, finding out what they want, and persuading them that your business offers them just that. If you do this well, customers are more likely to decide to buy from you. But remember that only the customer can actually decide when to spend their money and on what. Not you.

People who are good at selling are communication specialists. They tend to understand:

- Who is the key person they are really selling to (it might not be the person you first deal with who makes the final decision)
- How people use facial expressions and body language to communicate
- How important it is to listen and develop a relationship with the customer
- How important trust is for customers
- How important it is to be able to deal with people's worries and objections
- How important it is to be able to close the sale by asking for a firm order

False friendliness and pushiness won't win people over. Even if customers buy once, they most likely won't come back. Be yourself, and learn some of the communication skills if you feel you don't already have them.

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## COMMUNICATE YOUR PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

In many selling situations there is a need to demonstrate selected products and services to the customer with the intention of showing how things work, proving their capability, communicating features and benefits and increasing the chance of making a sale.

## FEATURES AND BENEFITS

Suppliers and manufacturers will supply you with information about products you have for sale. They do this to increase your product knowledge and to support you in your endeavours to sell their goods.

The facts and figures about an item are the "features" how much it weighs, its dimensions, what rating it is, how many rpm it works at, the kW it produces, the torque that is developed, the ohms involved, its specific density, etc.

However, in many selling instances these facts and figures are of little use, and quoting them can actually hinder the selling process. While some customers are motivated to



find out every detail about a product, there are many who are totally uninterested in the features but desperate to know the benefits.

The "benefits" are the things that the product can do for, or bring to, the customer. In the selling process, you should aim to "Sell the benefits, not the features".

Computers are a classic example. While there are quite a few who understand computer jargon, lots of purchasers don't. Their eyes glaze over when staff members begin talking about ROM, RAM, bytes, and memory.

***"This one is beauty; it's got 5.7 CPU with boosted flusters, an 888 RAM and a 120 GB H DD. There are two PS/2 ports, a VGA port and PCI card slots. It's got a colour 21 inch LCDVDU, and a wireless internal/external remote network grosser with an elongated back flush. All for \$1299 including GST".***

Don't give the features, give the benefits! "It's got lots of memory, it's fast, you can play games on it, and it's cheap".

Rather than telling the customer what material the clothes are made from, how much the products are tested just tell them "It's hard wearing and fireproof".

**Sell the benefits, not the features.**

**Tell the benefits, not the features.**

**"Features are fantastic" but "benefits are best".**

Benefits you should look for in order to increase the chances of selling include:

- It is fast
- It will save time
- It is hard wearing
- It is easy to use
- It is light
- It will make you healthy
- It will save you money
- It is portable
- It is safe



Some of the features and benefits of a cap might be:

Feature	Rational Benefit	Emotional Benefit
Brand	Good quality	Seen as trendy
Large peak	Keep the sun off face	Fashionable
Black	Easy to keep clean	Will not stand out in the crowd

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### SPECIALIST KNOWLEDGE

Being able to specialise in a certain product or knowing when to refer to a specialist sales person is a handy tool to have when dealing with customer needs.

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### DESCRIBING THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS OF A PRODUCT

During the Purchasing Period you need to describe product use and safety to customers. In many instances, the need for this is non-existent as most products are single use, and there are no safety issues. In other instances there may be several important safety issues that need to be addressed.

### PRODUCT USE

Yet again, a full and comprehensive understanding of product knowledge is essential. It is vital that you know the extent and limitations of the products and services you offer. Lots of products are capable of performing a variety of tasks, but there are usually prescribed or common sense limits that apply.

The golden rule when communicating product information is to "assume nothing". You must have an approach that accepts the customer will know nothing about the product and it is up to you to tell them. Methods of explaining product use may include:

- In house videos, usually provided by manufacturers/suppliers
- In house training
- Demonstrations



- Letting the customer have a go
- "Walking" the customer through the instruction manual, or similar
- Showing examples of what the product can do/has done
- Listing specific examples of what the item cannot do. If you think this is a waste of time, just recall the story about the woman who sued the makers of a microwave when she put her poodle in the microwave to dry it after a bath. She was successful because the instructions didn't specifically state that animals were not to be put in the oven

## SAFETY

This is a very important area. Never make up comments about safety. The information you provide must be factually based, so if you don't know find out. Sources of safety information include:

- Direct from the supplier or manufacturer
- The sales representative
- Product information packaging, instruction manuals, leaflets, product specifications
- WorkCover - including Codes of Practice, User Notes and relevant standards
- Feedback from customers
- Recall notices

Your explanation of safety information should also cover areas such as:

- Protective equipment and personal protective clothing needed
- Specific training requirements
- Specific electrical (and other) ratings, fittings, installation, service and spare part requirements
- Protection of others, explaining the dangers that may apply to onlookers, children, pets, other physical objects
- Explanation of safety signage - many items have safety graphics that can appear unclear. Point these out to purchasers and tell them what they mean
- First aid treatment
- Precautions that can be taken to minimise accidents or incidents
- Advice as to where the customer can obtain additional safety information

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## REFER TO A SPECIALIST

Much of the previous advice presented in relation to product knowledge and safety issues applies here too. There will be many occasions when your level of knowledge, expertise, experience and understanding is insufficient to meet customer needs, so you will need to refer customers in these instances to the appropriate product specialist.



The appropriate product specialist may be someone else in the store, or may be someone:

- At head office
- At another organisation
- Located at the suppliers
- Within the manufacturing company

When referring customers to the appropriate product specialist, do so:

- With an apology
- With involvement, interest and concern and not as an opportunity to "get rid of" your customer
- Explain the reason you are doing so because this person is the best, most experienced, longest serving, most highly trained, qualified, etc.
- Quickly
- Introducing the two parties to each other
- By name, and outlining the customer's needs
- Building confidence and credibility in your expert

It is important for you to realise that referring someone to a specialist person is not an admission of incompetence. In fact, the reverse is true and it is an indication of your professionalism in passing the customer on to the person best able to assist them.

Where possible stay with the customer and the specialist to learn what happens, but beware the age old advice that a little knowledge may be dangerous. Stores identify specialist personnel for a good reason, and your role is to use them to achieve a customer and store win-win situation.

If you don't know who the subject experts/ product specialists are in your organisation, then ask your supervisor, and go and introduce yourself.

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### ANSWER THE CUSTOMER'S QUESTIONS

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When selling benefits, you will need to develop the ability to answer routine questions about store merchandise accurately and honestly, or to refer the customers to other, more senior (or specialist) staff.



Routine questions commonly relate to:

- Prices
- Price reductions
- Quality
- Features
- Benefits
- Location of stock
- Supplementary services provided by the store
- Recommendations
- Product knowledge
- Safety & performance issues
- Country of origin
- Stock levels
- Suitability and durability of the product
- Product availability

When answering customer questions it is important to address the real question that is being posed, even when the real question has not been stated. This means, often, answering a question with another question.

Be sure to remove personal bias, prejudice, assumptions and stereotyping of customers. You know that not all customers are the same and they are individuals, so this really must be factored into the answers you supply.

Compounding this fact is the reality that many customers genuinely do not know what they are talking about and are striving to cover their ignorance by asking what they believe is an informed and intelligent question, but which may be confused or flawed.

Responding to routine customer questions is an excellent way of establishing initial customer relations, building credibility based on product knowledge, demonstrating interest and showing a desire to be of assistance.

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## WARRANTIES AND AGREEMENTS

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Manufacturers differ in what they warrant, and you need to know something about the differences so that the customer can compare the advantages and disadvantages of each.



Your business might offer extended warranties for some items, usually at a cost to the customer. You must know how they work, what the inclusions and exclusions are as well as the benefits customers receive.

For instance; the purchase price of a television that the customer is interested in is \$550 - warranty period 12 months, with no option for an extended warranty. There is, however, another television set which is comparable in picture and sound quality. The shelf price is \$450 with a 12 month warranty - however, there is a 5 year extended warranty option available for \$100. If this is accepted the total cost of the television would be \$550. It is the task of the salesperson to explain, in terms of benefits, the difference between the 2 options.

Always ensure that the customer understands the fundamentals of the warranty. It should be clearly explained and the customer must agree to the warranty terms and conditions by signing the documentation. Under the Fair Trading Act a salesperson is obliged to fairly and correctly interpret warranties and guarantees – in other words you are not to misrepresent the things that are covered by warranty agreements or to press customers for extended warranties under misleading conditions. You are also obliged to clearly explain any extra or ongoing costs associated with warranty and/or service agreements.



You must provide the warranty and any other documentation detailing the terms and conditions of the sale with the purchase/ merchandise.

- What other agreements might be involved in the sale?
- Does your store offer any extended service or maintenance options, for example, on-site attendance in case of problems?

It is important to remember that any promise made to a customer must be honoured. Warranties, guarantees and agreements with customers are legal and enforceable contracts. The customer has the right to hold you to the promise and if the promise you make is against store policy, you will have a problem.

Remember also that customer service only ends when the customer is satisfied with both the product and the service they have purchased. This can be achieved through good product knowledge, with the use of good communication and interpersonal skills and by delivering to the customer what you have promised.



## HANDLING ITEM EXCHANGE AND RETURNS

In some cases customers may not be satisfied with their purchases after they get home, and they may wish to obtain a refund or exchange an item. It is important that you know the legislative requirements for your State or Territory as well as your organisation's policy on refunds.

Your business may have set procedures to record returned goods. This is done to become aware of items that may have problems, to maintain accurate records of stock and sales, and for security.

### Self-test 2.3

Match the below list of items as either benefits or features.		
	Benefits	Features
Two pleats on either side		
Five belt loops		
Able to wear a belt		
Able to carry wallet at back of pants		
Neat appearance cuffed		

### Self-Test 2.4

Which form of purchased warranty covers more years than a product would normally be warranted for?

- ☐ Implied warranty
- ☐ Express warranty
- ☐ Extended warranty



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## TOPIC 3 - ADVISE ON PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

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### PROVIDE ADVICE THAT IS CLEAR, IS SUPPORTED BY VERIFIABLE EVIDENCE AND IS COMPATIBLE WITH ORGANISATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

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During your time at your workplace, you might become responsible for giving advice on your workplace's promotional activities or to delegate aspects of these tasks to others.

To perform this task effectively you will need a broad knowledge of the promotion of products and services specific to your organisation. Using your previously attained product knowledge will cover half of these requirements, and you can review your organisational requirements to learn about their specific promotional activities.

You will need to ensure that when you are advising on your workplace's promotional activities that all information you provide to the relevant personnel is clear and has valid evidence to support it.

Promotional activities may include:

- Advertisements
- Client functions
- Employee functions
- Media announcements
- Product launches
- Web pages
- Deals to attract customers
- Marketing strategies



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### REQUIREMENTS

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- Plan your promotions
  - Identify promotional activities and decide whether or not they suit the organisational requirements
  - Plan and schedule of promotional activities according to your organisation's marketing needs



- Determine overall promotional objectives. Consult your supervisor or clients (or other designated individuals and groups)
- Make sure that time lines and costs are realistic and consistent with your budget.
- Develop a plan to provide details of the products and services being promoted
- Coordinate promotional activities to achieve your goals
  - Identify your personnel and resources and prepare them for work
  - Decide how each member of your promotional team will contribute to the job and get their agreement
  - Establish and conduct relationships with targeted groups in a way that enhances the positive image of your organisation
  - Use networks to help implement your promotion
- Review and report on your promotional activities
  - Analyse audience feedback and data to determine the impact of the promotional activity on the delivery of products and services
  - Assess effectiveness of planning processes to identify possible improvements in future activities
  - Collect feedback and provide to personnel and agencies involved in promotional activity
  - Analyse costs and time lines to evaluate the benefits accruing from the promotional activities
  - Prepare conclusions and recommendations from verifiable evidence and provide constructive advice on future directions of promotional activities
- Other required skills
  - Read a variety of texts to prepare general information and papers; and to write formal and informal letters according to your target audience
  - Select and use technology appropriate to a task
  - Manage unexpected events

### Self-Test 3.1

Which of these are promotional activities? You may choose more than one.

- ☐ Advertisements
- ☐ Web pages
- ☐ Marketing strategies
- ☐ None of the above



## Self-Test 3.2

Match the actions on the left with a sample requirement to achieve it	
1. Plan your promotions	A. Select and use technology appropriate to a task
2. Coordinate promotional activities to achieve your goals	B. Plan and schedule promotional activities according to your organisation's marketing needs
3. Review and report on your promotional activities	C. Collect feedback and provide to personnel and agencies involved in promotional activity
4. Other required skills	D. Use networks to help implement your promotion

### ENSURE THAT PROMOTIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND MATERIALS ARE APPROPRIATE TO PRESENTATION OF THE ORGANISATION'S PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

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The number one consideration that promotional marketing needs to take into account is your products and services. Seeing as these are why you are in the business, it stands to reason that you will want to make sure that your promoting strategies incorporate your products/services first and foremost.

The way to do this efficiently is to produce a unique selling proposition. Your unique selling proposition (USP) is the marketing statement you use to sell your products and services to prospective customers. Unless your target market hears your USP, they may never know why yours is the business they should buy from. A well-planned advertising strategy will use your USP to entice customers to buy from you.

### HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR USP

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To develop your USP, you need to focus on your business. Consider:

- What do I do that no one else does?
- What is unique about my business?
- What is my unique story? (e.g. product selection, service standards, staff training)
- How can this be made different from my competitors?



Then consider your customers:

- What does the customer want?
- What need or want are they really trying to satisfy?
- What is the main reason my customers buy from me?
- What can I do to match or exceed those expectations?
- What can I do to make sure the customer gets what they want?



Answering these questions will help you to establish your competitive advantage - the edge you have over your competition

A successful advertising campaign will spread the word about your products and services, attract customers and generate sales. Whether you are trying to encourage new customers to buy an existing product or launching a new service, there are many options to choose from.

The most suitable advertising option for your business will depend on what products or services you are advertising, and your target audience. For example, if you know that your target market reads a particular magazine, you should advertise in that publication.

It is critical that you make sure any advertising or advice you offer to potential customers is accurate, covers all relevant information (i.e. it is complete), is understandable and is concise (i.e. short and to the point).

### Self-Test 3.3

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

**Market, customers, marketing, business**

Your unique selling proposition (USP) is the \_\_\_\_\_ statement you use to sell your products and services to prospective \_\_\_\_\_. Unless your target \_\_\_\_\_ hears your USP, they may never know why yours is the \_\_\_\_\_ they should buy from.

### Self-Test 3.4



A successful advertising campaign will:

- ☐ Spread the word about your products and services
- ☐ Produce a unique selling proposition
- ☐ Increase working hours
- ☐ Generate new product ideas

## ENSURE THAT COSTS OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES CONFORM TO BUDGET RESOURCES

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During the planning stages of promotional activities you will need to draw up a budget within which all expenses that will be taken to implement your promotional strategy can be tracked and evaluated.

Advertisements and promotions can become expensive when you consider all of the possible ways to promote your products and services, so cost-effective strategies are generally a good option in most cases. Some cost-effective advertising solutions include:

- Local Directories in both print and online
- Signage of vehicles, shop fronts, stationary and uniforms
- Displaying promotional material at community locations or at non-competitive businesses
- Advertising on the reverse side of receipts
- Radio, television and print advertisements
- Event sponsorship
- Use of social media

If you have little knowledge of how to effectively manage the advertisement and promotion of your business, it may be a good idea to seek independent advice from someone such as an advertising agency. While this may at first seem like an expensive option, it may be better than investing your entire advertising budget into a strategy that fails to achieve results.



It is important to note that people who have been pleased by your customer service or product offering are likely to pass on good comments to others. By managing good



relations with your customers you are effectively using them to advertise your business through word-of-mouth.<sup>3</sup> It is extremely useful to collect testimonials from satisfied customers that can then be used for your marketing.

When deciding how much to spend on advertising, consider your costs and cash flow as well as your goals. While spending too much on advertising is risky, spending too little can also cause problems. If your advertising is not professional or frequent enough to generate results, competing with other businesses may be difficult.

Knowing how much other businesses spend on advertising can be invaluable when setting your budget. Benchmarking is the best way to compare your business with other similar-sized businesses in the same industry.

### Self-Test 3.5

To track all expenses of your promotional strategy, a budget will need to be drawn up during the planning stage of your promotional activity.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

### Self-Test 3.6

Some cost-effective advertising solutions include:

- ☐ Local Directories in both print and online
- ☐ Signage of vehicles, shop fronts, stationary and uniforms
- ☐ Radio, television and print advertisements
- ☐ All of the above

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<sup>3</sup> <http://toolkit.smallbiz.nsw.gov.au/part/3/12/61>



With your competitors banging on the doors of your customers to build their own business, you need to know how satisfied your customers are. Likewise, to acquire competitors' customers you need the same information.

The information you gain from customers about your products and services is customer feedback. You can utilise this feedback to improve and change any aspects that are failing to perform correctly, or that are giving negative experiences to your customers.

[illegible]

- Audit documentation and reports
- Complaints
- Customer satisfaction questionnaires
- Lapsed clients
- Quality assurance data
- Returned goods
- Service calls



### Self-Test 3.7

Fill the gaps with words from the list below:

Customers, negative, feedback, information

The \_\_\_\_\_ you gain from customers about your products and services is customer \_\_\_\_\_. You can utilise this feedback to improve and change any aspects that are failing to perform correctly, or that are giving \_\_\_\_\_ experiences to your \_\_\_\_\_.

## EVALUATE THE BENEFITS OF PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INCORPORATE IN PLANS FOR FUTURE PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES



Promotions, when done well, are an effective way for you to market your business or products and services. They are planned and coordinated events meant to sell a specific product or service for a limited time. The benefits of using promotions are varied, yet the majority of them stem back to the same starting point, bringing in more customers.

Considering this, here are a few benefits of well-planned promotional activities:

- **Creates differentiation** – When you launch a new product or ask customers to engage with your business in a new way, this sets you apart from your competition. Promotion planning compels you to identify something new or different that offers value to your customers
- **Creates word-of-mouth opportunities** – If you operate a retail business, your regular customers are almost always in a routine to buy from you. Promotions can often get your regular customers a new reason to be surprised and delighted by your business which gets them to talk about you to their friends
- **Drives customer decision making** – Limited availability offers can create a sense of scarcity in your customers that get them to act. When combined with new content that helps customers clearly see the benefits of what you are promoting, you can create compelling reasons to buy now. If you can add sampling of your promotional item to the mix, you'll create a lot of reasons for customers to buy
- **Creates company focus on marketing** – Developing a promotion calendar forces you to plan for new marketing programs focused at specific times of year. If you don't have a dedicated marketing team doing this for you already,



creating a promotions mentality will get you marketing with more frequency and give you more experience to build on

- **Creates testing opportunities** – Maybe you have ideas that you think customers will like but are unsure of the outcome. Promotions give you a limited time window to test new ideas and new products and to measure them. This will help you figure out whether they warrant additional investment of time and money to make them permanent products or services

You should always be able to quantify the return on your advertising or promotions. To do this, you will need to be able to track how each customer found out about you. This can be done through special differing offers in each promotion or questioning each customer at the point of sale.

By looking at the benefits of promotional activities you will be able to decide on the best course of action for future promotions, providing the opportunity to better configure them for your business and the clients that you provide products and services for.

### Activity 3.1

How could you evaluate the benefits of a promotion that has been used in your workplace?

### Self-Test 3.8

Well planned promotions:-

- ☐ Make your product and services appear the same as your competitors
- ☐ Take the place of needing word of mouth referrals
- ☐ Can focus and drive customers to make a purchase decision
- ☐ Will confuse customers



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## SUMMARY

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Now that you have completed this unit, you should have the skills and knowledge required to provide advice and information within an organisation about the development and distribution of its products and services.

If you have any questions about this resource please ask your trainer. They will be only too happy to assist you when required.



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