



# **/ TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES & PROCEDURES**

RECOMMENDED TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES  
AND CALL HANDLING

**BRIDGESTONE**  
*Solutions for your journey*

## **/ Introduction round**

- » Name
- » Job title and role / work history



## **/ Objectives**

Following this training session, you will gain the ability to understand what it takes to

**ANSWER  
ENGAGE  
&  
USE CONFIDENTALLY**

one of the most powerful sales tools in your workplace



# / Agenda

1 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TELEPHONE

2 COMMON TELEPHONE MISTAKES

3 TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE

4 BUILDING RAPPORT

5 GATHERING CUSTOMER INFORMATION

6 MYSTERY SHOP / LIVE CALLS

7 QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

8 CUSTOMER NEEDS

9 CUSTOMER OBJECTIONS

10 BUYING SIGNS

11 CLOSING THE CALL/ SALE



## / How will we do this?

### From Me:

- ➔ Tips and advice
- ➔ Do's and don'ts
- ➔ Personal experiences

### From You:

- ➔ Interaction
- ➔ Feedback
- ➔ Experiences

### Moving Forward:

- ➔ Action planning
- ➔ Implement plans
- ➔ Monitor results



### **LEARNING**

- ➔ Tell me – I will forget
- ➔ Show me – may remember
- ➔ Involve me – I will understand

## / Did You Know?

A calls to appointment conversion rate of  
**between 2.0 – 4.0 %\***

is considered to be a success  
and an increase of just

**0.5 %\***

is classed as an acceptable improvement  
by some companies!

**For every 100 calls you take – up to 98 of  
them go elsewhere!!!!**

\* - source webfx.com



## **/ Objectives**

How To Get The Most From Today

- ➔ **Set an objective**
- ➔ **Take notes**
- ➔ **Ask questions**
- ➔ **Share your experiences**
- ➔ **Use handouts**
- ➔ **Stay polite**
- ➔ **Keep things confidential**



# **/ 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TELEPHONE**

Telephone techniques and  
call handling



**BRIDGESTONE**  
*Solutions for your journey*



## / Importance of the telephone

Even with rise of internet shopping many people still use telephone for enquiries to many businesses:

➔ Who?

➔ Why?

First contact is crucial!



## / 4 Impact of Missing Calls

### 1 Missed Customer Opportunity

- » 85% of people asked in a survey replied that if their call is not answered they will not call back as a first-time customer

### 2 Poor R.O.I.

- » Your company may have invested significantly in marketing / advertising campaigns – this money is wasted if the resulting calls go unanswered

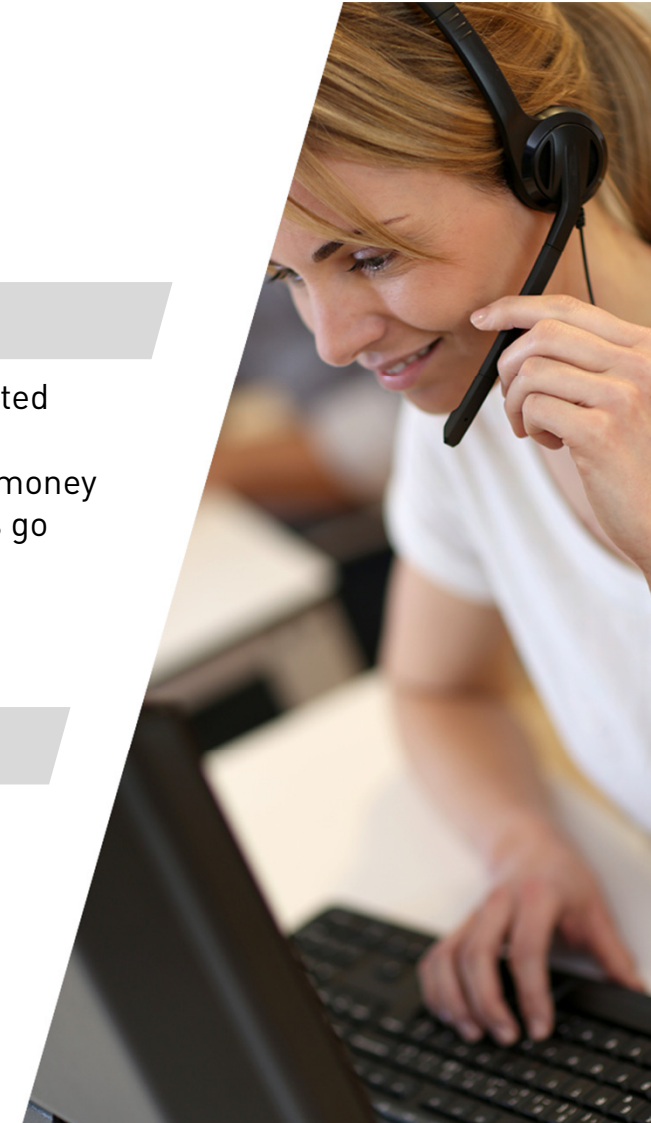
### 3 Low Customer Retention

- » Be honest, how many customers want to stay with a company when their calls regularly go unanswered

### 4 Poor Business Reputation

- » In the world of instant internet feedback it can be easy to get poor reviews

\*source – Answer4U survey 2021



## **/ Breakout exercise:**

The not so obvious cost of a telephone to a business

Take just a few minutes and state what you think the depot telephone costs you as a company each year



## / What Can The Telephone Cost Your Depot?\*



Each year the telephone can cost you?

➔ £500 - £1000

➔ £1001 - £2000

➔ £2001 - £3000

➔ £3001 - £4000

**£4001 +**

\* - excluding outgoing calls



## “But it’s only a telephone!”



IF YOUR COMPANY MAKES ON AVERAGE £30  
PROFIT PER TYRE THAT IS THE EQUIVALENT TO  
THE PROFIT FROM SELLING OVER **1500** TYRES!!

- ➔ Avg call length - 5 mins
- ➔ Avg no. of calls/day - 15
- ➔ Time per day on phone - 75 mins (1.25 hrs)
- ➔ Avg company labour cost - £12 / hr
- ➔ Avg telephone cost per day - £15 (£12 x 1.25 hrs)
- ➔ Avg telephone cost per week - £90 (£15 x 6 days)
- ➔ Avg telephone cost per year - £4618 (£90 x 52 weeks)
- ➔ Cost to a 10 depot company per year - £46,180

## **/ 2. COMMON TELEPHONE MISTAKES**

Because its always “just there” the telephone can be taken for granted

We have already seen that this should not be the case so lets go a little further



## **/ Common mistakes when answering the telephone**

Groupwork

Please take 10 minutes to list some of what ***you*** think are the most common mistakes people make when answering calls in a workplace

Think about what annoys you when you are the customer



## / Common Telephone Mistakes

- ☎ Not answering the call promptly / at all
- ☎ Unprofessional greeting
- ☎ Being too casual
- ☎ Keeping customers on hold too long
- ☎ Evading responsibility (“not my problem”)
- ☎ Eating / drinking whilst taking calls
- ☎ Noisy background / background conversations
- ☎ Being too pushy
- ☎ Not listening to customers needs





## **/ 3. TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE**

Again let's take 10 minutes to list some of what ***you*** think is good etiquette when answering calls in a workplace

Think about what you expect when you are the customer



## **/ Key skills for effective telephone use**



## **/ 4. BUILDING RAPPORT**



**BRIDGESTONE**  
Solutions for your journey

# / Building Rapport

## What is “Rapport”?

”a friendly relationship in which people understand each other very well. rapport with somebody She understood the importance of establishing a close rapport with clients”\*

\* Oxford English Dictionary

## How do you build rapport?



# Building Rapport

How do you build rapport?



# Building Rapport

## How do you build rapport?



Questions give you information  
What type of question to ask?  
What questions do you need to ask?  
Helps understand customers needs



Different levels of listening  
Shows you are interested in their call  
Avoids missing important information



Shows the customer that you are listening  
It's basic good manners  
Gains customer information for any follow up visit



No-one likes to feel like they are being "conned"  
Being genuine gains trust  
Who wants to deal with someone who is disingenuous?

## **/ 5. GATHERING CUSTOMER INFORMATION**

What you need, why you need it and why it is important to protect it



## / Information gathering

Please take a few minutes to list what YOU think are the important pieces of information you need to acquire from the customer on an initial telephone enquiry





## / Information gathering

- » What information do we need?
  1. Name & contact details
  2. Customer needs
  3. Vehicle details
- » Why do we need this information?
  1. Customer call back
  2. Knowing customer needs allows you to know how to pitch the “sale”
  3. Vehicle details confirm the correct tyre size etc
- » What issues can arise from not having the relevant information?
  1. Confusion
  2. Wrong information / prices quoted
  3. Lack of professionalism
- » What do we need to be aware of when gathering customer information?
  1. GDPR – General Data Protection Regulations
    1. Secure storage
    2. Correct usage



## / Benefits of recording information

- » Know your customer
  - New customers can quickly become regulars
- » Promote your business with new customers
  - New customers will tell more people about their experience
- » A chance to turn a call into a visit (into a sale)
  - Each call to the depot is a potential chance to gain a new customer
- » Keep track of any marketing promotions you may be running
  - Promotions can be expensive. Logging the call to visit ratio can confirm the success (or not!) of a particular promotion
- » Make good use of the costs of the telephone (as discussed earlier)
  - The telephone costs you more than you think so make the best use of it
- » Improve the overall experience for the customer
  - In a competitive market customers are now looking at an overall experience rather than just “the cheapest”
- » More professional approach when the customer visits the depot
  - Gives a better all-round experience for all concerned and can result in positive feedback and reviews.





## **/ 6. MYSTERY SHOP / LIVE CALLS**

How do your competitors fare when dealing with telephone enquiries



**BRIDGESTONE**  
*Solutions for your journey*

## / Mystery shopper calls



This latest round of mystery shopper calls is based upon new, more up-to-date scenarios regarding EV (Electric Vehicle) tyres

The aim is to ensure that drivers of EVs are given the correct information and advice for tyres being fitted to their vehicles

This is not just an exercise to find fault with someones telephone manner as it is difficult to know exactly what is going on at the time of the call. The aim is to identify areas where some further product information and training could be advantageous



## **/ 7. QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES**

Here we will look at the different ways people gain information.



## **/ Questioning techniques**

Two distinct types of questions:

### **OPEN QUESTIONS**

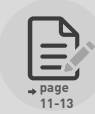
Open questions start with **What, Where, Who, How, When** etc. They are designed to invite a response from the person you are asking.

### **CLOSED QUESTIONS**

Closed questions are questions that can be answered with a simple **yes or no** meaning you need to ask more question to get the same information as you would from an open question.



## / Questioning techniques – OPEN or CLOSED



### QUESTION

- Q1 - Can I help you?
- Q2 - Do you know your tyre size?
- Q3 - Do you have a brand in mind?
- Q4 - How many tyres do you need?
- Q5 - Do you have a budget in mind?
- Q6 - Do you cover a high mileage?
- Q7 - What time would you like visit?
- Q8 - Do you tend to drive fast?
- Q9 - Is it just you who drives the car?
- Q10 - Do you need the tyres straight away?



## Questioning techniques – OPEN or CLOSED

### OPEN / CLOSED QUESTIONS

- |               |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CLOSED</b> | Q1 - Can I help you?                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>CLOSED</b> | Q2 - Do you know your tyre size?                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>OPEN</b>   | Q3 - What vehicle are the tyres for?<br><i>Knowing the exact vehicle the tyres are for is important</i>                                                                 |
| <b>OPEN</b>   | Q4 - How many tyres do you need?<br><i>This can be very important if the vehicle is an EV where the correct tyre choice is critical.</i>                                |
| <b>CLOSED</b> | Q5 - Do you need the tyres straight away?                                                                                                                               |
| <b>CLOSED</b> | Q6 - Do you cover a high mileage a year?<br><i>Knowing this, and explaining this to a customer, demonstrates that you are knowledgeable and informed of the vehicle</i> |
| <b>OPEN</b>   | Q7 - What time would you like visit?<br><i>Customers are in a good position to offer the correct fitment advice.</i>                                                    |
| <b>CLOSED</b> | Q8 - Do you have a budget in mind?                                                                                                                                      |

By asking the correct questions at the correct time you will be able to ascertain the customer needs

## Questioning techniques – OPEN or CLOSED

OPEN / CLOSED	QUESTION
CLOSED	<u>How</u> may I help you?
CLOSED	<u>What</u> size tyres do you need?
CLOSED	<u>What</u> is the vehicle registration number? * <i>Obtaining the vehicle registration number can give you information on the type of vehicle the tyres are for</i>
OPEN	N/A Q4 - How many tyres do you need?
CLOSED	<u>When</u> do you need the tyres fitted?
CLOSED	<u>How</u> can be very important if the vehicle is an EV where the correct tyre choice is critical.
OPEN	N/A Q7 - What time would you like visit? <i>Knowing this, and explaining this to a customer, demonstrates that you are knowledgeable and informed of the vehicle requirements and are in a good position to offer the correct fitment advice.</i>
CLOSED	<u>What</u> is your style of driving?
CLOSED	<u>Who</u> is it just you who drives the car?
CLOSED	<u>What</u> do you have a budget in mind?

## / Questioning techniques – OPEN or CLOSED

OPEN / CLOSED

Alternative?  
QUESTION

Q1 - Can I help you?

Q2 - Do you know your tyre size?

Q3 - Do you know the registration number?

Q4 - How many tyres do you need?

Q5 - Do you need the tyres straight away?

Q6 - Do you cover a high mileage?

Q7 - What time would you like visit?

Q8 - Do you tend to drive fast?

Q9 - Is it just you who drives the car?

Q10 - Do you have a budget in mind?

## **/ 8. CUSTOMER NEEDS**

The next slides look at how customers needs differ and are not always obvious



# / Needs vs Requirements

The difference between a NEED a WANT and a DEMAND:

- **NEED**
  - » Something that satisfies the basic requirement
    - » “needs” new tyres
- **WANT**
  - » Requests directed to specific types of items
    - » “wants” premium tyres
- **DEMAND**
  - » Requests for specific products that the buyer is willing to and able to pay for
    - » “demands” a tyre suitable for a high performance or electric car



## / Understanding needs

### There are 4 recognised customer needs:

1. Stated need
  - ➔ The customer wants a “cheap tyre”
2. Real needs
  - ➔ The customer wants a tyre whose operating cost, not initial purchase cost is low
3. Unstated needs
  - ➔ The customer expects good service from the tyre dealer
4. Delight needs
  - ➔ The customer buys tyres and receives a gift (free repair warranty, gift vouchers etc)

Be aware though that sometimes people are simply working to a fixed budget



## **/ 9. CUSTOMER OBJECTIONS**

The next slides look at objections the customer may have, how to recognise the *real* objections and how to address them



## / Customer objections

Take 5 minutes to discuss and list what **you** think is the definition of an objection then list some of the most common objections you are faced with when dealing with customers on the telephone.





## **/ Customer objections**

### **What is an objection?**

- » The Oxford dictionary defines the word objection as:

**“an expression or feeling of disapproval or opposition; a reason for disagreeing**

- » Sales objections are problems a customer needs to overcome prior to purchasing a product.

**Objection handling is the process of helping potential customers overcoming these sales objections**



## / Customer objections

The 3 most common customer objections\* are:

- ➔ **Price** – the cost appears, to the customer, to be too high
- ➔ **Product** – the customer is unsure of the product being offered
- ➔ **Timing** – customer may not be ready to purchase right now

\*shopify.com



## / Customer objections - Price

- Price – the cost appears, to the customer, to be too high
- Price is often seen as the single most important factor that influences a customer decision to purchase and can be a sensitive issue
- Budget related sales objections **are** the hardest to overcome
- Understand there are 2 price-based objections
  1. The customer truly does not have the budget to purchase premium product at the time
  2. The customer has the budget but is unsure the product being offered is worth the price



## **/ Customer objections - Product**

When making a purchase of a new set of tyres that could cost in the region of £600\* it is understandable when a customer has concerns about the product being offered

Customers may not initially see the overall benefit of a premium product

Customer may not be aware of the latest product

Customer may have concerns regarding switching from their current product brand

\*example online retailer 4 x 225/45R18 (91W) T005



## / Customer objections - Timing

Tyre purchases are often made on one of two basis:

- ➔ **Customer A** - “need to buy now” basis – damage / MOT due / worn to legal limit etc.

May need to have the tyre straight away

- ➔ **Customer B** - plans ahead and gathers information / quotes in readiness for when they do need to purchase

Which customer do you feel is more likely to be open to spending a little more on a premium product - A or B?



## **/ Handling customer objections**



## / Handling customer objections - Price

As mentioned earlier the price objection is by far and away the most common and can also be a sensitive issue.

If the customer says “the cost is too high” – try to establish what the customers actual budget is

If you have gone in at the lowest price already it can leave you with nowhere to go

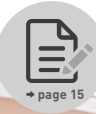
If you start at a mid range or premium price point you have the option to move if needed – remember, some people will have a strict budget to work to

Options available (company dependent):

Finance plans such as “pay in 3” or “Klarna”



## **/ Handling customer objections - Product**



**As long as the customer thinks the price is right for the quality – then the price, as such, is totally irrelevant.**



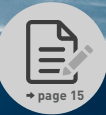


## / Handling customer objections - Timing



As previously mentioned, some customers will be in a “distress” type situation where they ***need*** a tyre as opposed to those simply gathering information on price and availability

The customer who needs to buy is most likely the “easiest” sell whereas the one looking to get information is the one you need to work hardest at – and can also be more likely to buy premium tyres as they can be looking for guidance / information, not just prices.



## / Handling customer objections - Timing

NOW

LATER

For customers who need a tyre / tyres as soon as possible it is obviously not an option to keep all sizes and all brands in stock – how do we overcome this if the customer cannot / will not wait?

- » Wholesalers can now offer deliveries several times a day – be aware (particularly on premium brands) that your buying price may vary vs buying direct from the manufacturer and adjust sell out accordingly
- » Sell up from budget tyres to a quality brand you have in stock.



## / Handling customer objections - Timing

NOW

LATER

For customers who are price information / availability gathering you have the advantage of them having more time to decide

Likely to be a more brand aware / cost and quality conscious customer

Be aware they may be calling MANY depots to get the information as well as using the increasing number of online retailers

Gathering information from these customers can give you:

- Contact info for call backs

- Future sales opportunities

- Option to offer mobile fitting (if applicable) at a date to suit them



## **/ Steps to Overcome Objections**

1. Listen carefully to understand the objection
2. Repeat the objection back to the customer to show you understand
3. Confirm your understanding by asking questions to clarify
4. Respond to the objection with an appropriate solution
5. Confirm with the customer that the objection has been handled
6. If all the above is good move to the next stage in the process



## **/ 10. BUYING SIGNS**

Once customers objections have been dealt with then that customer may well show signs of being ready to complete.

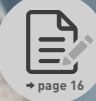
Being able to recognise these signs will go a long way towards getting the customers commitment.



## **/ Buying Signs**

On page 16 of the handbook take 5 minutes and in your groups list some of the different ways a customer will indicate he is ready to buy.

This can depend on whether the outcome of the call is to result in a visit /purchase or a call to enquire for tyres required at a later date.



## Buying Signs

The customer **accepts your arguments** with a confirming answer

- ➔ The customer **asks questions** about the product's features
- ➔ The customer **asks** about the system for **making an appointment**
- ➔ The customer asks **questions** about issues that have **already been dealt with**
- ➔ The customer asks if the **tyres are in stock**
- ➔ The customer gets **talkative** about the **product**
- ➔ The customer asks details about **opening hours / payment methods** etc

## **/ 11. CLOSING THE CALL/ SALE**

Once customers objections have been dealt with then that customer may then show signs of being ready to complete.

Being able to recognise these signs will go a long way towards getting the customers commitment.





## **/ Closing the Call / Sale**

In your groups list some of the different methods you can use to close a call / secure a sale.



## **/ Closing Methods**

**1** The Standing Room Only Closing

**2** Direct Close

**3** The Alternate Close

**4** The Concession Close



## **/ Closing Methods**

### The Standing Room Only Close

- Creates a sense of urgency in the customers mind
- Can work when the product in question is in high demand / short supply
- Also works with limited time offers ie “We can only offer this price until....”
- Can be seen as high pressure selling
- Should only be used in honest situations



## **/ Closing Methods**

### The Direct Close

- » The direct close is where the salesperson simply asks for the sale

For example:

Q: So, can we go ahead and fit those  
tyres?

If the answer is “Yes”, the job is done, if not  
then address the objection stalling the process



## **/ Closing Methods**

### The Alternate Close

- » Attempt to close by giving the customer a choice of one product or another

For example:

Q: Would you like to go for the  
Bridgestone or the Firestone?

This puts the customer in the mindset that the sale is agreed, and these are the final details



## / Closing Methods

### The Concession Close

- » Make a small final concession at the very end and say it so that it sounds like a very special personalised concession.

For example:

“Tell you what, if you order 4 tyres today, I can throw in free puncture insurance

Make the concession conditional “I can do “xxxx” ***if you order the tyres today***” – don’t give away concessions without a benefit for you.



# / NEXT STEPS



**BRIDGESTONE**  
Solutions for your journey

## / Summary

- The telephone, even in the age of internet shopping is STILL a very valuable tool to drive sales in your depot
- Used correctly it can be the difference between a customer visiting your depot or going elsewhere
- Keep in mind just how much the telephone can cost a company
- Converting calls into customer visits can be key to the success of a business
- Remember your telephone etiquette
  - Answer promptly
  - Be polite
  - Speak clearly
  - Be prepared
- Customer objections will always be around – handled correctly they can convince a customer to come to your centre
- You don't have to sell the product on the phone – sell your business first
- Use closing methods that suit your style – don't be too pushy as this WILL put customers off





## **/ Next Steps**

Hopefully, this session will have given you some insight into the continuing importance of the telephone – even in today's modern work environment.

This training is available for delivery on site to any centre staff who you may feel would benefit from it.

Please speak to today's trainer to enquire on available dates.



....end of module for today

Thank You

