



So What?

Nick is taking a class for college credit this semester, and he wants to get a good grade. He'd like to record the professor's lectures, so he can listen to them again while he's studying. He decides to buy a digital voice recorder. He's never owned one before, and he doesn't know the first thing about them. One of his classmates recommends an electronics store at the mall, so he decides to check it out. The store has several models with different features and prices. Nick is overwhelmed by the choices and doesn't know how to choose.

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There are many buying decisions to make before he purchases the recorder—some he has already made, and some he still needs to make. What Nick needs now is a skilled, alert salesperson to come to his aid. A successful salesperson knows how to assist customers with all the “mini” decisions that add up to the final purchase decision. Read on to learn more about these decisions and how you can help your customers make them!



Objectives:

- A** Identify types of customer buying decisions.
- B** Facilitate customer/client buying decisions.

All the Small Things

“I just can't decide.” It's a common statement made by customers when trying to determine what good or service they should purchase. Have you ever been in this situation? You may not have realized it, but there are several smaller decisions that must be made before you can reach a final buying decision.



As you probably know from experience, **buying decisions** usually require a certain amount of assistance and reassurance from a salesperson. This applies not only to retail situations, but business-to-business sales as well. Successful salespeople are well prepared to help customers make all the small decisions that add up to the main purchase decision. Failing to assist customers at any point during the process can result in losing the sale and possibly even losing the customer.

Customers and clients are unique. Each is at a different stage in the decision-making process when s/he talks to salespeople. There is no particular order in which they make the small buying decisions. In some cases, one or more of these decisions has already been finalized before even coming in contact with a salesperson. As a salesperson, you must therefore remain alert so that you can give each customer the assistance s/he needs to reach decisions throughout the sale—and to make the final decision to buy.



- *The availability and advantages of credit.* When customers are unsure about the price decision, the availability of credit may persuade them to buy. Many stores offer deals such as 24-months' credit with zero interest. However, it's important that customers understand the pitfalls of credit. It would be unethical for a salesperson to convince a customer to buy on credit if the customer truly cannot afford the product at any price.

The Gray Zone

Jake aspires to be a successful salesperson and to help his customers with all their buying decisions. At his job, however, he's under a lot of pressure to make as many sales as possible. He often feels he's trying to convince customers to buy products they don't need. He might not be the only salesperson who might not be the only salesperson who, however, Jake's customers buy products that it isn't what they need. His customers could be buying as they can pay for it or put it on credit, it's sold. What do you think about Jake's reservations about selling? Is it okay to convince customers to buy products they don't need? How much responsibility does a salesperson have when it comes to customers' finances?

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Summary

Several smaller decisions must be reached before a final buying decision is made. These decisions usually require a certain amount of assistance from a salesperson. The decisions are made in no particular order and involve need (why to buy), product (which one to buy), place (where to buy), price (how much to pay), and time (when to buy).



1. What is a buying decision?
2. What is a need decision?
3. What is a product decision?
4. What is a place decision?
5. What is the price decision?
6. What is the time decision?

