



Developing a competitive edge for your business

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As the buyer's needs change, it is sometimes possible to change our approach or positioning as we market and sell our products and services. The new approach will ideally meet the new and deeper needs of the buyers.

Examples of businesses who have adjusted their offering:



Television Commercials – No Risk



Foxtel



Printing & Data Management

Ideas to tweak your company's offering in a tightening market:

- _____

- _____

- _____



Our buyers adjusted focus

There will be a stronger focus on the initial price

There will be less money about, budgets will be reduced

It is likely our competitors will resort to price reductions and chase harder

Customers will be slower to make decisions, they will procrastinate

Buyers will be told by their superiors to negotiate everything, they will expect to have a “win”

Decisions will be made higher up the tree

Sales adjustment

Break your quotations down to show smaller figures. Itemising is a powerful tool in this market.

Focus your energy towards your higher profit services.

Don't follow your competitors down a price reduction spiral. Allude to your own stability.

Create scarcity. Build a deeper sales process.

Allow them to have a 'win'. Keep something up your sleeve to negotiate with.

Ensure you work with the decision maker.



During periods where buyers are cautious about spending, our sales process needs to be deeper and certainly more rigorous. A typical sales process may look like this:

Step 1

Take incoming inquiry or generate interest via a) cold call
b) regular account management call

Step 2

Send information to the client or prospect via email

Step 3

Meet with client face to face

Step 4

Follow up

Step 5

Follow up

Step 6

Follow up

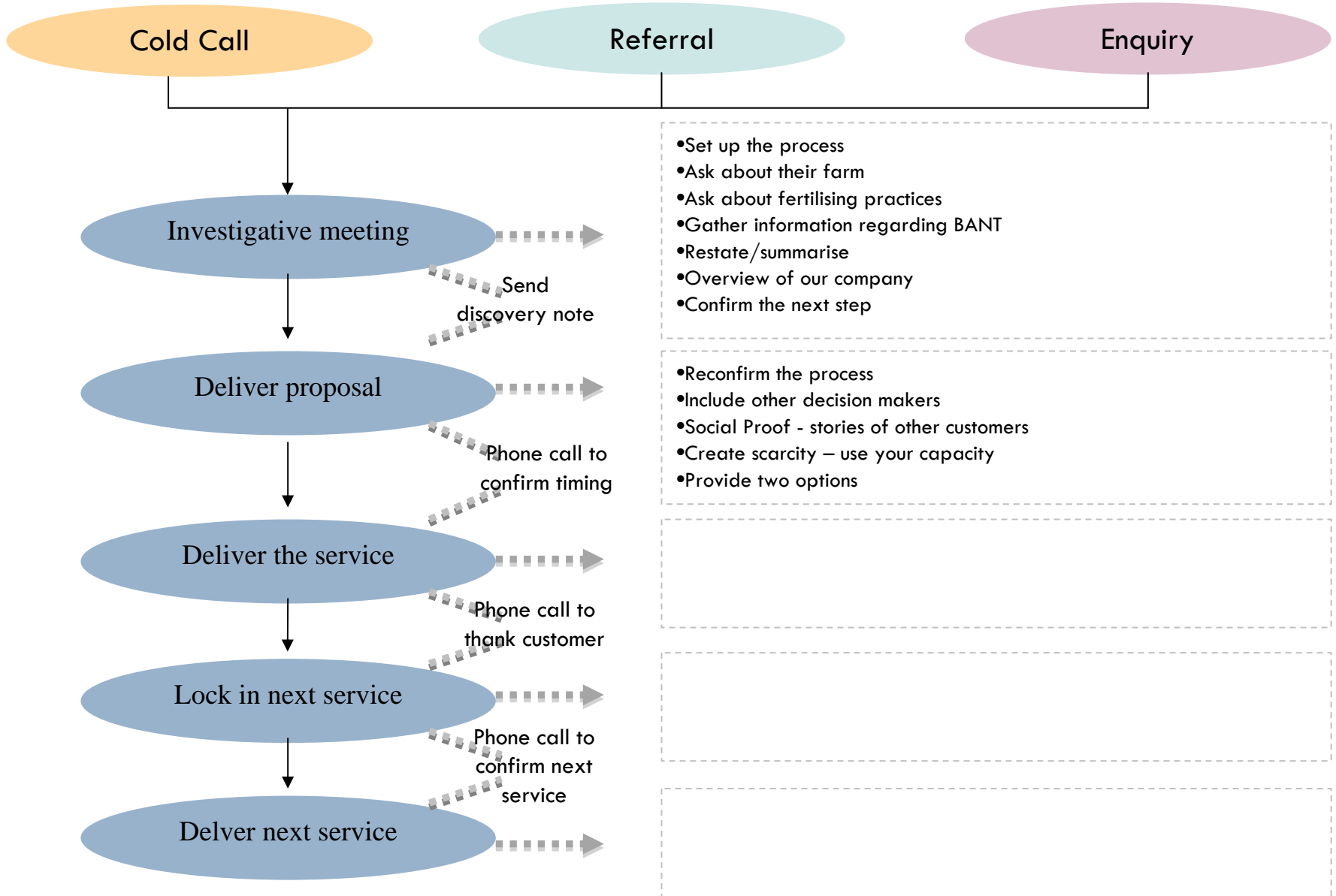
Step 7

Follow up

The revised approach will have an increased focus for face to face meetings. It will also generally have more steps and thus allow the client time to warm to our idea. It is the logic of the steps and the progression this system creates that will eventually lead to greater success.



sample – selling spreading services to a new customer





sample process – ladies shoes - retail

30 Minutes

Initial greeting

- Warm body language – smile
- Initial greeting
- Starter question
- Follow up questions

Set up the sales process

- Explain how the sales process works up front and ask for their approval

Investigative stage

- Ask about them
- Ask about the use of the shoes
- Ask about timing and budget

Summary point

- Restate what you have heard
- Confirm your understanding of their needs
- Offer the key success factors

Demonstration stage

- Show 3 suitable shoes
- Tell first, show second
- Show preferred option last
- Interaction (fitting of shoe)
- Allow the customer to compare
- Discuss accessories

Recommendation point

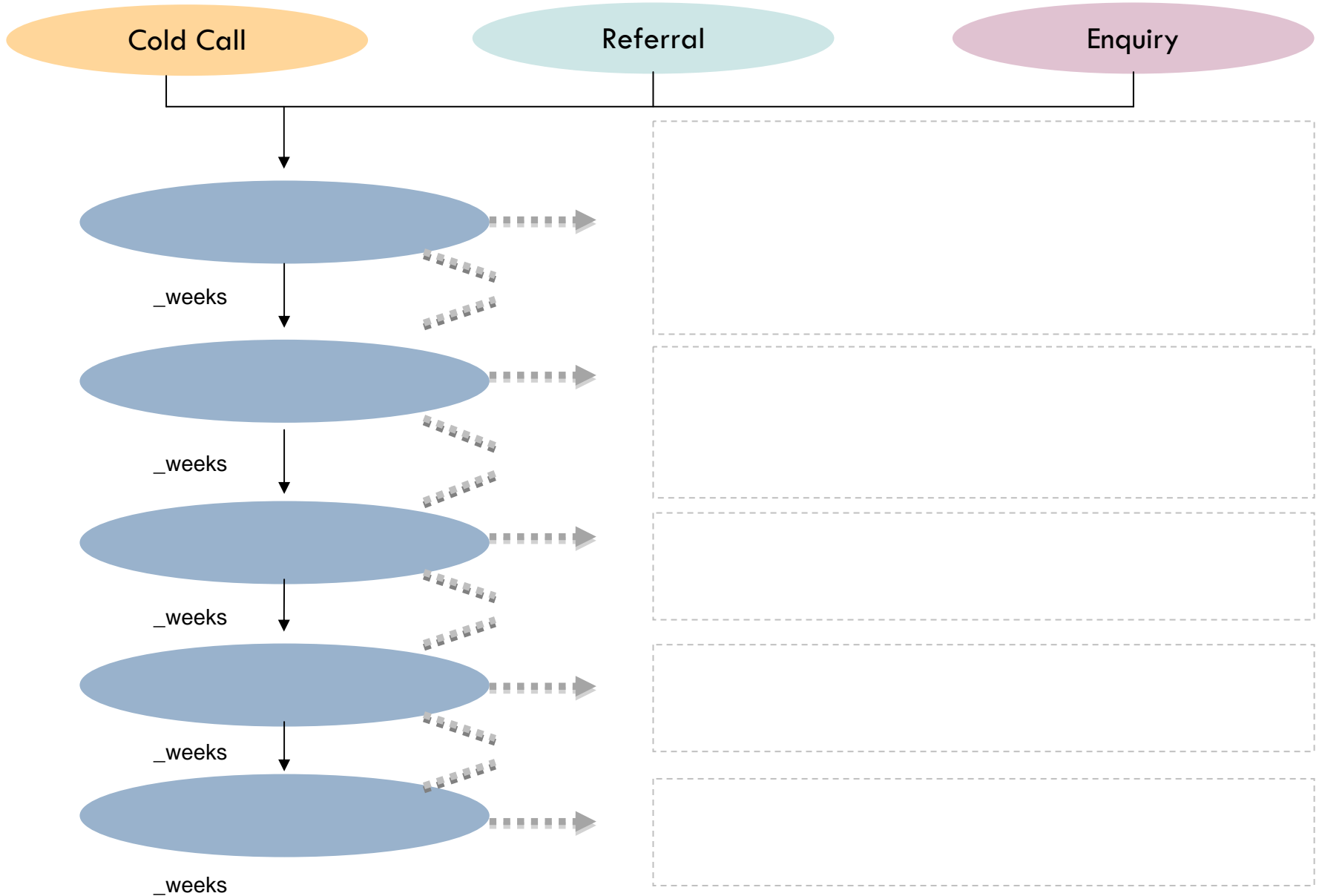
- Make clear recommendation
- Ask for their thoughts (temperature check)

Closing point

- Ask if it is ok to go ahead



ideal sales process – Selling Compost: Existing Customer





Sales Process Stage	Steps to be taken within each stage

A deeper level of persuasion is required when customers become hesitant to commit. To take our selling skills to the next level it is interesting to consider a little psychology. The concept is that as human beings we sometimes make decisions on instinct rather than on detailed rational analysis.

Understanding that the individuals we negotiate with are under similar pressure allows a clever negotiator to gain a powerful advantage throughout the process.

Robert Cialdini in his book “Influence – Science and Practice” (ISBN 0-321-01147-3) looks at this concept and in fact categorise seven distinct influencing and/or negotiation weapons.

The key to their success is their subtlety. If we can become conscious of these weapons and recognise the opportunity to build them into our ‘game plan’ we obtain significant leverage.

The negotiation tools are:

- Reciprocation
- Commitment and Consistency
- Social Proof
- Liking
- Authority
- Scarcity
- Contrast