

## Lesson E2–7

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# Selling Landscape Design and Construction Work

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**Unit E.** Horticultural Business Management

**Problem Area 2.** Marketing Horticulture Products

**Lesson 7.** Selling Landscape Design and Construction Work

### **New Mexico Content Standard:**

**Pathway Strand:** Agribusiness Systems

**Standard:** VI: Use sales and marketing principles to accomplish an AFNR business objective.

**Benchmark:** VI-D: Merchandise products and services.

**Performance Standard:** 1. Identify key components to organize a sale. 2. Build and develop customer relationships. 3. Conduct sales presentation. 4. Provide post-sale service. 5. Handle customer complaints. 6. Locate prospective new customers.

**Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

1. Identify how to determine a client's landscaping needs.
2. Identify the five steps to making a landscape sale.
3. Explain the importance of maintaining good customer relations.

**List of Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

**Recommended Resources.** One of the following resources should be selected to accompany the lesson:

Biondo, Ronald J. and Charles B. Schroeder. *Introduction to Landscaping: Design, Construction, and Maintenance*, Second Edition. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 2003.

**Other Resources.** The following resources will be useful to students and teachers:

Pierceall, Gregory M. *An Illustrated Guide to Landscape Design, Construction, and Maintenance*. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 1998.

Schroeder, Charles B., et al. *Introduction to Horticulture*, Third Edition. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Publishers, Inc., 2000.

## List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies and Facilities

Writing surface  
Overhead projector  
Transparencies from attached masters  
Pictures of landscapes

**Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

Closing  
Family inventory survey  
Opening  
Portfolio  
Preparation  
Presentation  
Probing  
Sale

**Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

*Begin the lesson by choosing one student from the class and give them a picture of a landscaped home or a pre-designed landscape from a catalog. Next, choose another student from the class. It is the goal of the first student to “sell” the landscape to the second student. Tell them to use any of the ideas covered in class such as promotions or coupons. Give several pairs of students the opportunity to role-play.*

# Summary of Content and Teaching Strategies

**Objective 1:** Identify how to determine a client's landscaping needs.

**Anticipated Problem:** How can you determine a client's landscaping needs?

- I. A landscape project begins with a sale. A **sale** is an exchange of goods or services at a mutually agreed upon price. Before you can attempt to make a sale you must first know what the customer needs. To determine a customer's landscaping needs, you need to know what they plan to landscape and how much they plan to spend.
  - A. The designer is the person most likely to know what a customer wants or needs. The designer meets with the customer and helps them develop a landscape plan. By knowing what a customer needs, the designer can better incorporate those needs into the design.
  - B. In order to figure out what a customer needs, the designer must first do some probing. **Probing** is the practice of investigating what a customer wants or needs. An instrumental part of probing is the family inventory survey. The **family inventory survey** is a form the customer fills out which gives the designer information regarding the family members, public area, outdoor living area, and service area. Understanding this information will give the designer a better chance at successfully designing a useable landscape.

*Discuss each section of the survey while reviewing TM: E2–7A. Refer to the recommended resource for further information on this objective.*

**Objective 2:** Identify the five steps to making a landscape sale.

**Anticipated Problem:** What are the five steps in making a landscape sale?

- II. Determining a client's needs is part of the opening, which is one of the five steps to making a landscape sale. The other four steps are the preparation, presentation, closing, and follow-up. Understanding each of these steps will help the designer make the sale.
  - A. The first step to the sales process is preparation. **Preparation** involves being ready for a number of factors. In this step the designer should make an appointment, prepare a portfolio for the customer, and develop a sales strategy.
  - B. The second step of the sales process is the opening. The **opening** is the first meeting between a designer and a customer. The designer should build a strong rapport with the customer and define their needs. This is the point where a family inventory survey would be developed.
  - C. Step three is the presentation. The **presentation** gives the designer the opportunity to introduce products or services that meet the customer needs. These needs were discovered in step two, the opening. In this step the designer can show the prospective customer a portfolio of past work. A **portfolio** is a book containing pictures of previous design work. This is a point for questions and answers about the project itself and prices.

- D. Step four is the closing. The **closing** is the end of the initial sales interview and the point where an agreement is made to begin working on the project. The three methods of closing are the straight forward approach, the assumed close approach and the summary approach.
1. In a straight forward close, the designer requests that the customer buy the services from their company. This method is both simple and direct.
  2. In the assumed close, the designer takes for granted that the prospective customer will purchase their service. This method is more common with reputable landscape companies.
  3. The third approach is the summary. In this approach the designer restates the major points of the sales presentation. The restatement may be similar to an assumption of sale.
- E. The fifth step of the sales process is the follow-up. In this step, the designer makes continued contact with the customer to ensure they are happy with the service they are receiving. Installing a landscape could take weeks to months to complete. It is important that the customer is happy with the service they are receiving.

*Review each step of the landscape sales process using TM: E2–7B. If time allows, have students continue “selling” (interest approach) landscapes to each other.*

**Objective 3:** Explain the importance of maintaining good customer relations.

**Anticipated Problem:** Why is it important to maintain good customer relations?

- III. In any business, it is important to keep the customer happy. Step five of the sales process, the follow-up, is the key to good customer relations. It is also important to follow-up after the project has been completed. Good service and appropriate follow-up visits will ensure repeat customers and customers referred by word of mouth. To create positive influence and build a strong relationship with the customer, the following activities should occur:
- A. The landscaper should complete the work as scheduled.
  - B. All bills and invoices should be handled in a timely fashion.
  - C. The landscaper should provide directions to the customer on how to care for the plants in the landscape.
  - D. The installation work should be completed properly.
  - E. The customer is routinely asked if they are pleased with the progress of the work.
  - F. Care should be taken to avoid disturbing or damaging nonlandscaped areas and features.

*Display TM: E2–7C and use it to illustrate the important activities that are included as part of the follow-up step. The recommended resource includes detailed information on all aspects that should be included as part of the customer follow-up.*

**Review/Summary.** Summarize the lesson by reviewing the student learning objectives. The anticipated problems can be used as student review questions. Chapter reviews from the books listed on the resource lists may also be helpful.

**Application.** The following student activity can be used to apply the student learning objectives: Assign an appropriate activity from the *Introduction to Landscaping Activity Manual*.

**Evaluation.** Evaluation should be based on student comprehension of the student learning objectives. This can be determined using the attached sample written test.

## **Answers to Sample Test:**

### **Part One: Matching**

1=a, 2=d, 3=b, 4=c, 5=f, 6=e

### **Part Two: Completion**

1. sale
2. closing
3. family inventory survey
4. follow-up
5. preparation

### **Part Three: Short Answer**

1. straight forward: designer requests that the customer buy services from their company; assumed: the designer takes for granted the customer will purchase their products and services; summary: the designer restates the major points of the sales presentation

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# Test

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## Lesson E2–7: Selling Landscape Design and Construction Work

**Part One: Matching**

*Instructions.* Match the term with the correct response. Write the letter of the term by the definition.

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| a. portfolio    | d. probing     |
| b. closing      | e. preparation |
| c. presentation | f. opening     |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A book containing pictures of previous design work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Practice of investigating what a customer needs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. End of the initial sales interview.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The opportunity for the designer to introduce products or services.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. First meeting between a designer and a customer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Being ready for a number of factors in the sales process.

**Part Two: Completion**

*Instructions.* Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is an exchange of goods or services at a mutually agreed upon price.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ is the point of the sales process where an agreement is made to begin working on the project.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ is a form the customer fills out which gives the designer information regarding family members, public area, outdoor living area, and service area.
4. The fifth step of the sales process is the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The first step of the sales process is the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Part Three: Short Answer**

*Instructions.* Provide information to answer the following questions.

1. List and describe the three methods of closing a sale.

**FAMILY INVENTORY SURVEY**

**FAMILY MEMBERS:**

Name	Age	Sex	Hobbies
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

**PUBLIC AREA (front of the house):**

Driveway needs \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of cars owned by family \_\_\_\_\_  
Off-street parking needed \_\_\_\_\_  
Entry garden \_\_\_\_\_  
Landscape lighting \_\_\_\_\_  
Privacy from the street \_\_\_\_\_  
Structures, such as fences, walls, brick pavers, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

**OUTDOOR LIVING AREA (rear of the house)**

How much time do you want to spend maintaining the landscape?

Minimal \_\_\_\_\_ Moderate \_\_\_\_\_ Quite a bit \_\_\_\_\_

What are your gardening interests? Describe preferences.

Vegetable garden \_\_\_\_\_  
Perennial garden \_\_\_\_\_  
Annual flowers \_\_\_\_\_  
Rose garden \_\_\_\_\_  
Small fruits (raspberries, strawberries, grapes, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Large fruits (apples, peaches, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

What favorite plants would you like included in the design? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List any plants you do **not** want in your landscape: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## FAMILY INVENTORY SURVEY (continued)

What size groups do you anticipate entertaining? \_\_\_\_\_

Patio \_\_\_\_\_ Deck \_\_\_\_\_

Patio materials (brick pavers, flagstone, concrete, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent seating \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have a grill? \_\_\_\_\_

Gas \_\_\_\_\_ Gas line from the house? \_\_\_\_\_

Charcoal \_\_\_\_\_

Sink \_\_\_\_\_ Water \_\_\_\_\_ Electrical outlets \_\_\_\_\_ Storage \_\_\_\_\_

Swimming pool \_\_\_\_\_

Portable \_\_\_\_\_

Permanent \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Shape \_\_\_\_\_

Decking \_\_\_\_\_ Material \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosure \_\_\_\_\_

Lighting \_\_\_\_\_

Dressing facility \_\_\_\_\_ Storage \_\_\_\_\_

Lawn Games \_\_\_\_\_

### SERVICE AREA:

Vegetable garden \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_

Compost bin \_\_\_\_\_ Cold frames \_\_\_\_\_

Greenhouse \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_

Lawn and garden tool storage \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_

Dog run \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Dog house \_\_\_\_\_

Clothesline \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent \_\_\_\_\_ Portable \_\_\_\_\_

Garbage cans \_\_\_\_\_ Number \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred location \_\_\_\_\_

Play area for children \_\_\_\_\_

Outdoor gym \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred surface material (sand, wood chips, grass, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Shade desired \_\_\_\_\_

Other features you would like included with your landscape:

Statuary \_\_\_\_\_

Water features \_\_\_\_\_

Fountain \_\_\_\_\_ Pool \_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Aquatic plants \_\_\_\_\_

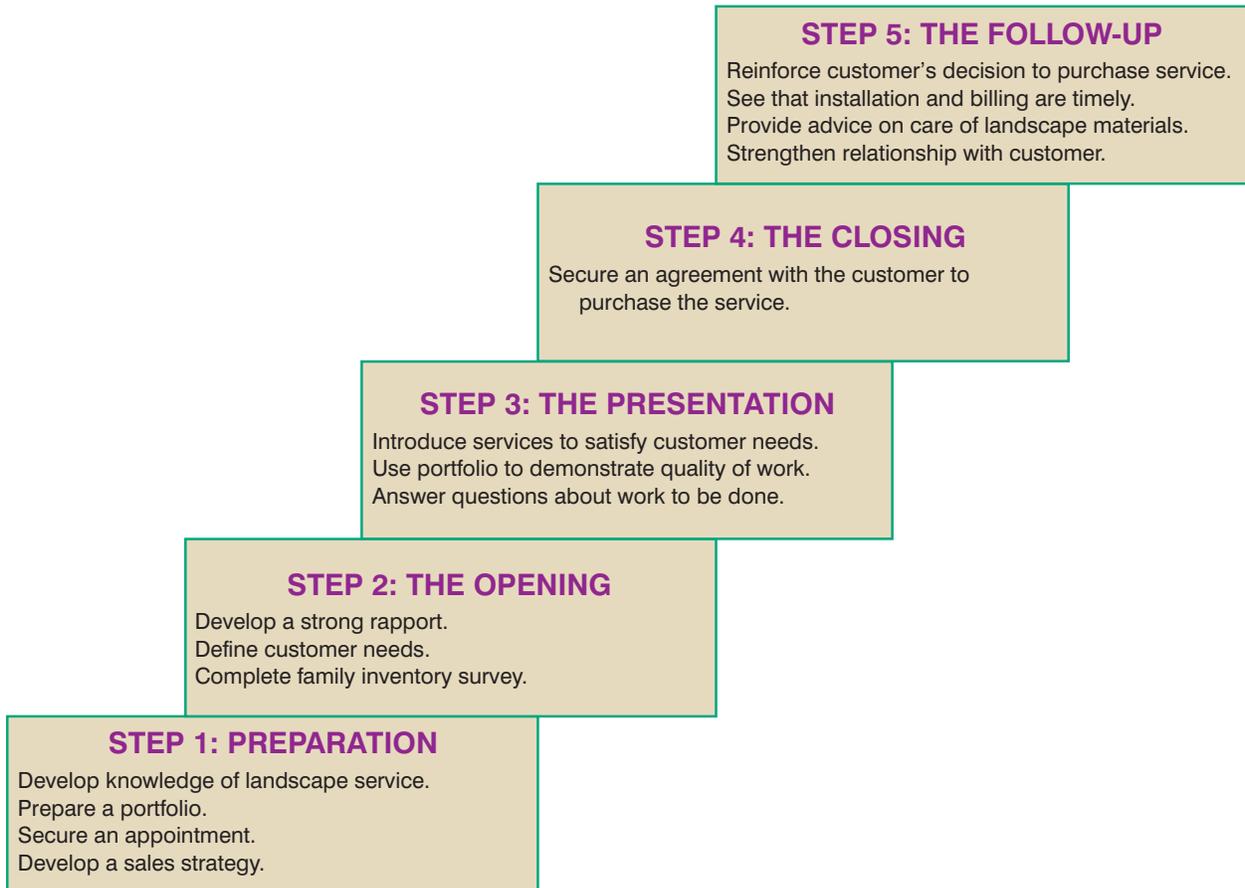
Bird features \_\_\_\_\_

Feeder(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Bath(s) \_\_\_\_\_ House(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Other notes or comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## TM: E2-7B



*(Courtesy, Interstate Publishers, Inc.)*

## **IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE FOLLOW-UP**

- 1. Work is completed as scheduled.**
- 2. Bills are handled in a timely fashion.**
- 3. Advice on plant care is provided.**
- 4. Installation work is properly completed.**
- 5. Customer satisfaction with the work is continually assessed.**
- 6. Care is taken to avoid damage to surrounding areas.**