

Unit 3 Intermediaries, distribution, advice, customers

A Intermediaries


1 Read the following opinion shared by many people in the insurance industry:

Insurance is sold, not bought.

What do they mean by this? Do you agree? Why (not)?

Match the qualities that an ideal insurance adviser or broker should have on the left with the words of similar meaning on the right.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> trustworthy | a genuine |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> well-informed | b convincing, believable |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> honest | c practical, sensible |
| 4 <input type="checkbox"/> persuasive | d ethical, honorable |
| 5 <input type="checkbox"/> down-to-earth | e truthful |
| 6 <input type="checkbox"/> sincere | f knowledgeable |

 Brainstorm other words which describe qualities an adviser or broker should have. Discuss which of these qualities are most important. Say why.

2

Reading

Read the article from an insurance company's customer newsletter explaining the various distribution channels and intermediaries used to sell insurance. Match the headings to the correct sections.

- 1 Bancassurance
- 2 Tied agent
- 3 Direct sales
- 4 Broker
- 5 Independent financial adviser
- 6 Multi-tied agent / adviser

Guide to Insurance Intermediaries

There are many different people you can turn to when you want to buy insurance. This overview of intermediaries will help you decide which one is best for you.



- a
If you know exactly what you want and have fairly simple requirements, you can use this channel. It cuts out the need to speak to an intermediary by offering insurance online or over the telephone.
- b
You might also consider going to one of these people. They are professionals who give impartial advice about financial products and are not associated with any one company.
- c
These intermediaries don't give you quite so much choice. They are professional advisers but can only give advice about and recommend products from the provider they work for.
- d
Then there are these people: They are allowed to recommend products from a limited selection of providers, rather than just one, as in the case above.
- e
For true independence, go here. This adviser is an independent agent who represents you, rather than the insurance company, and tries to find you the best policy by shopping around and comparing products.
- f
Finally, we have this distribution channel. It involves selling insurance and other financial services via banks.

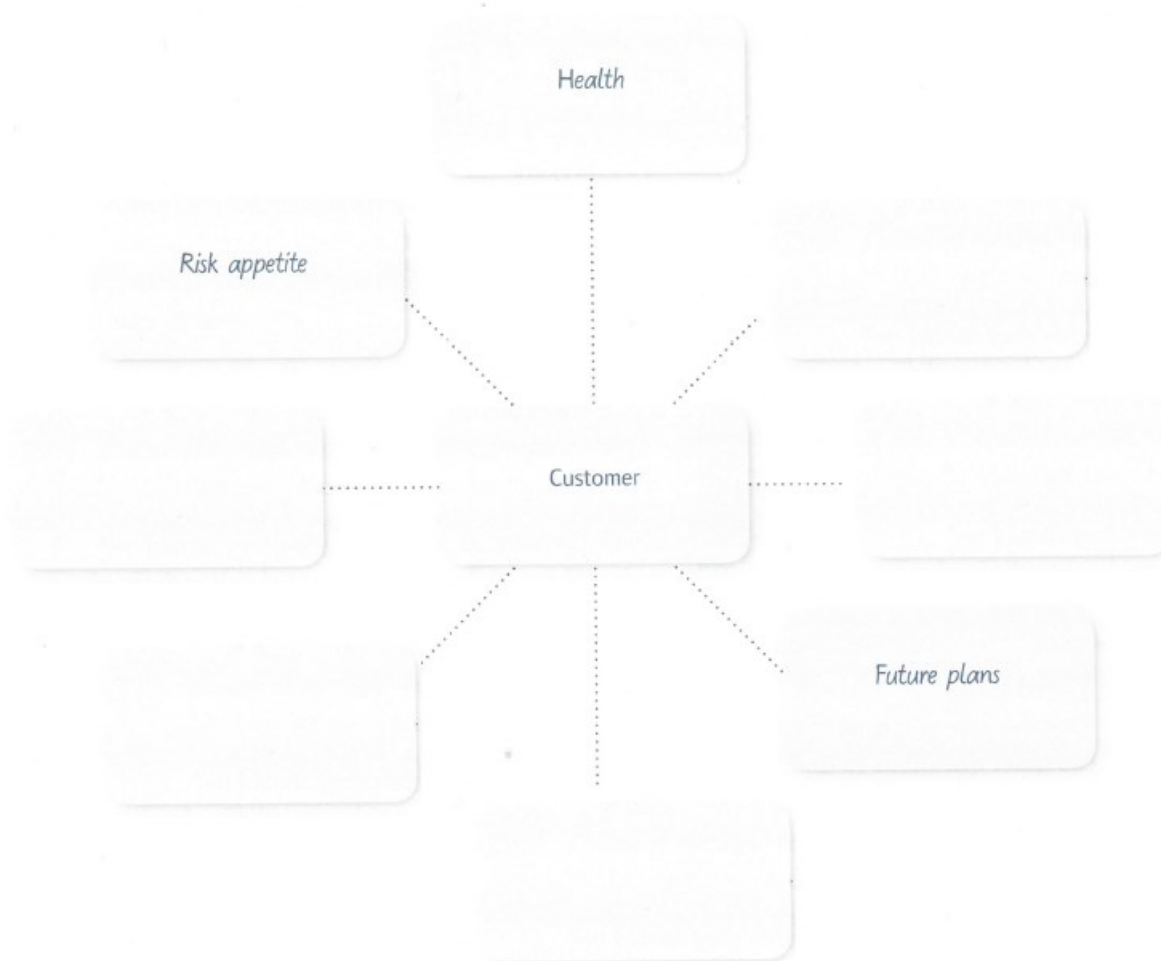
Vocabulary

- 1 ■ contribution
- 2 ■ incentive
- 3 ■ lump sum
- 4 ■ provider
- 5 ■ commission
- 6 ■ administration costs
- 7 ■ product charges
- 8 ■ acquisition costs
- 9 ■ premium

- a The costs associated with managing a financial product that aren't directly related to selling it
- b The money paid into a pension fund
- c Money paid to a person or organization based on the value of the goods they've sold or the services they've provided
- d The money a customer pays to the insurance company in return for coverage
- e The part of a premium or contribution that pays for buying a product
- f Money spent by an insurer to get new business, usually made up of administration costs and commission
- g A company or person that offers a service
- h An amount of money paid in a single payment
- i Something that encourages you to work harder

Customers' needs

It's important for insurance salespeople to know as much as possible about their customers' needs. What would you want to know about a new customer? Complete the mind map with more issues you think a salesperson should know about.



Match the sentences to form questions that could be used to get information from potential customers.

- 1 What is your attitude ...
 - 2 Could you please tell me ...
 - 3 Are you particularly interested ...
 - 4 How do you feel about ...
 - 5 Could you give me more details ...
- a ... of your plans for the future?
 - b ... in ethical investments?
 - c ... critical illness insurance?
 - d ... toward risk?
 - e ... about your general state of health?



Brainstorm questions that could be used to get further information from customers.

Did you know?

Lots of insurance companies use an agent in their advertising to personify their friendly, reliable image. British insurer Prudential launched their "Man from the Pru" advertising campaign in 1949, although the phrase had been used to describe Prudential's door-to-door salesmen since 1854. German insurer Hamburg Mannheimer introduced a similar figure, Herr (Günter) Kaiser, in 1972, and he lasted for 37 years.

Grammar – The passive

Focus

Read the examples of the Passive.

Present Simple

The *Codex* is put on public display once a year.

Past Simple

The *Codex* was written by Leonardo da Vinci about 500 years ago.

Choose the correct words to complete the rules.

We form the Passive with *be / do* + past participle.

We use the Passive to focus on the *object / doer (agent)*.

We use the active form to focus on the *object / doer (agent)*.

We use *by / for* before the agent.

1 Change the sentences from active to passive.

Example They make iPhones in China.
iPhones are made in China.

- 1 The management introduced a new security system last month.
- 2 Somebody cleans the office every day.
- 3 Somebody stole my new motorbike.
- 4 They always check tickets on the train.
- 5 When did someone invent the microscope?
- 6 They published a new edition of the book last year.

2 Choose which of the sentences below should not use the passive form and change them to the active form.

- 1 A new car was bought by my sister.
- 2 Charles Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, UK in 1809.
- 3 Fresh fruit and vegetables are bought by us for our lunch menu every day.
- 4 A great new restaurant for dinner was found by them.
- 5 The new business centre was designed by an international team of architects.
- 6 Sales data will be released at the end of the month.

3 Complete the questions for the answers.

Example When were you born?
I was born in 1985.

- 1 When _____?
The new shopping centre was opened last spring.
- 2 Where _____?
The empty bottles are taken back to the factory.
- 3 Where _____?
It was made in the Philippines.
- 4 Why _____?
The road is closed because of an accident.
- 5 How much _____?
\$22 million was spent on the new headquarters.

Work skills: Meetings (stages in a meeting)

1 Match the stages of a meeting with the expressions in the speech bubbles.

The diagram illustrates the stages of a meeting in a circular flow. The stages are numbered 1 through 13:

- 1 Welcoming
- 2 Introductions
- 3 Starting the meeting
- 4 Stating the aim of the meeting
- 5 Introducing the first agenda item
- 6 Asking people to contribute
- 7 Moving to a new item
- 8 Introducing the final agenda item
- 9 Asking for questions
- 10 Confirming action points
- 11 Thanking people
- 12 Finishing the meeting
- 13 Confirming date of next meeting

The speech bubbles are lettered a through l:

- a: Could everyone check their sales figures after the meeting and get back to me?
- b: The first item on the agenda is 'Sales trends in Europe'.
- c: The main aim today is to review our recent sales performance.
- d: Has anyone got any questions?
- e: Gina, would you like to talk about Italy?
- f: Shall we make a start?
- g: We meet again at the same time next week.
- h: Thank you very much for your ideas and suggestions.
- i: The last item for today is ...
- j: That's all for today, I think.
- k: Let's introduce ourselves.
- l: So let's move on to the next item on the agenda.

Simulation



Personal pensions can be difficult to sell. One reason for this is the popular idea that charges and fees cancel out any growth you might enjoy and that it makes more sense to invest in a no-risk, savings account.

Make a list of the ways that your company could convince customers of the benefits of personal pensions.

Then have a meeting to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the ideas that you and your colleagues have thought of. Your aim is to write a list of three recommendations for your company about how it could make personal pension products more attractive. Use the phrases in the box to help you.

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Phrases to use

Expressing an opinion

- I think that ...
- If you ask me ...
- In my opinion ...
- I believe that ...

Agreeing

- I agree with you there.
- You're (absolutely) right.
- I couldn't agree more.
- I completely agree.

Meetings phrases

Disagreeing

- (I'm afraid) I disagree.
- I don't really agree with you there.
- I'm sorry, but I really don't agree with you.
- That doesn't seem quite right to me.

Grammar – countable vs uncountable nouns

Complete the rules with **countable** or **uncountable**.

_____ ¹ nouns have a singular and a plural form.

_____ ² nouns do not have a plural form.

We use *the* with countable and uncountable nouns.

We only use *a* or *an* with _____ ³ nouns.

Use the sentences in **4** to help you complete this table. Put a ✓ in the appropriate boxes.

		some	any	a lot of / lots of	(how) much	(how) many	a few	a little
Countable	<i>positive</i>	✓						
	<i>negative</i>							
	<i>question</i>							
Uncountable	<i>positive</i>							
	<i>negative</i>							
	<i>question</i>							

Choose the correct words to complete the sentences.

- The miners didn't have *many* / *much* food before the rescuers discovered them.
- The miners drank *a little* / *a few* water every day.
- There was *a lot of* / *many* space in the mine.
- To keep healthy, the miners took *a little* / *a few* vitamins every day.
- How *many* / *much* miners were in the mine? There were 33.
- The miners sent *information* / *informations* to the surface using notes.
- At first, they didn't have *any* / *some* music.
- They ate *some* / *any* cereal and *some* / *any* pears.
- The rescuers sent down *lots of* / *much* cigarettes.
- There weren't *many* / *any* ladders in the mine.

These words can be countable and uncountable. Put the correct word and form into the sentences.

business/es coffee/s exercise/s paper/s room/s space/s sport/s time/s

- SMBs are small to medium-sized _____.
- To get fit, you need to do lots of _____.
- There isn't enough _____ in my bag for a laptop.
- How many _____ did you try calling him?
- The best _____ in the world is made in Jamaica.
- Have you got any _____ for the printer? The tray is empty.
- There are three meeting _____ for this week's seminars.
- Football and rugby are my favourite _____.

Use the other form of the words in **7** to make a new sentence.

- My desk is covered with books and _____.
- There were plenty of empty _____ in the car park.
- _____ is big business, especially the Olympics.
- Have you got any _____ to read this report?
- Exports are up and _____ is booming.
- Doing vocabulary _____ every day helps you remember more words.
- The room was so small that there was only _____ for two people.
- Could I have two _____, please and a pain au chocolat.