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## The Decorator's sales process

The 7 steps  
to a more  
effective  
sales process

**Step 1. Marketing and your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)**

How to create your ICP and why it is important to target your marketing.

**Step 2. Initial contact**

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Make sure it's a good one!

**Step 3. Fact finding meeting**

How to get the most out of your first meeting with a potential client.

**Step 4. The proposal**

How to write and deliver a proposal that will convert more sales

**Step 5. Following up**

How to follow up effectively and why you should always do it.

**Step 6. Colour consultation**

Why offering a free service to the client is actually a benefit to you.

**Step 7. Completing the work and after care**

How to gain more referrals.

# Step 1

## Marketing and your Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

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The first step to effective marketing is knowing your target audience. A common mistake is to cast your net too wide and end up not getting the results you initially wanted. To combat this, we need to create what is called an Ideal Customer Profile (ICP)

What is an ICP? Well, this is something that is unique to every business. Essentially an ICP is a fictitious customer who would be a perfect fit for you.

Creating one is easy, but you must remember, in the same way that your business is constantly evolving, so is your ICP. You can start with some basics, but keep making the character more and more specific over time.

Example: Let's say your ICP is called Mary. She is 65 years old and owns a 3 bed semi. You've dealt with a lot of 'Mary's' in your time as a decorator and love the fact that she always pays on time, doesn't haggle the price and doesn't watch over you whilst you work.

Now you have the basics, you can establish how best to reach more Mary's. Use your experience of these customers to find out what media they consume. For example, perhaps Mary visits a local coffee shop every Tuesday, or uses Facebook to keep in touch with her Grandchildren. Maybe she always has a copy of the local paper on the kitchen table. The more you know about 'Mary' the more you can target your advertising to her. If you find out she chooses her decorator based on leaflets coming through the door, then you are better off doing this, rather than spending money on Google ads.

**Summary: Knowing your ICP means you can target your advertising. Spending less, but getting more in return.**

## Step 2

# Initial contact

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Initial contact can come in a number of ways, it can be your website, leaflets, referrals, social media or any number of other avenues.

The key with the initial contact is for it to be professional and consistent.

Take time to look at your business from the point of view of a potential customer. Does your website colour scheme and logo match your social media and leaflets? Consistent branding across all platforms makes it easier for customers to remember you.

Also, take time to consider how inviting your company is to approach. Is your social media profile full of swearing? When you answer the phone, do you say 'Hello' or 'Good Morning JM Decorating, how can I help?'

Remember that if you have pictures and videos of yourself and your staff on your website and general marketing, people are more likely to contact you.

Example: Have you ever watched the same Youtuber, followed a social media influencer or listened to the same podcaster so much that you feel like you know them? This is the ultimate goal. If a potential client already knows, likes and trusts you before they even call you, then the sale is almost a foregone conclusion.

**Summary: Take time to view your business from a customer's point of view and make it as clean, professional and inviting as possible.**

# Step 3

## Fact finding meeting

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Once the customer has made contact with you, it's time to set the first meeting. Note that I refer to this as a 'Fact finding meeting'. Don't approach the meeting thinking you need to make the sale there and then. The first meeting is to establish whether your company is a good fit for the client, and if the client is a good fit for you.

As well as measuring up, use discovery questions to understand their problems and see if you can resolve them. Take time to explain the different solutions you offer, whether that be using a dustless sander and a sprayer for a perfect finish or simply helping them clear rooms. Find out why they decided to get a decorator in. Do they have a deadline they are trying to hit? Are they interested in a perfect finish and know that DIY will not offer that?

Once you have questioned them and understood their problems and you have decided you are able to resolve them, explain the next steps. Remember, you may be the first trades person they have ever used, or they may have had a bad experience with their previous decorator, so make sure you guide them through the process as thoroughly as possible. Communication is key. Let them know what you plan to do, when you are going to do it and then make sure you deliver those promises on time.

**Summary: Don't approach the first meeting as a sale. Look at it as a fact finding mission. This change in mindset will make the client feel more at ease and will help you find out exactly what they are looking for.**

# Step 4

## Writing the proposal

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First things first: Make it personalised and offer them choice. Yes, you can use a template, but make sure you at least personalise it with their name and any specific needs you discovered in the fact finding meeting.

Remember to include a 'why choose us?' page. This could detail your experience, customer testimonials, any certifications and awards you may have. Use this opportunity to sell yourself. You only have to create this page once and you can add it to all of your quotes.

### Pricing:

There is a whole book on this called 'Fast and flawless pricing'. It details the benefits of pricing per metre, rather than day rate. Essentially this is what you should be aiming for. Establish what your cost per meter is by measuring your materials costs, overheads and the time it takes to complete jobs and then price your jobs accordingly. I thoroughly recommend the book, but if you choose to continue pricing in your usual way then the following can still help.

Customised add-ons and choice. From your fact finding meeting you should have found out if there are any extras your client might be interested in. Make sure you add these in. For example, if the customer is interested in a warranty consider offering 3 months warranty for snagging and touch ups for a certain price. If they go for it, great. Extra revenue for you. If they don't, great! You won't be getting call backs, as they chose not to go for the warranty.

**Summary: Offering choice and customised add-ons makes your quote more difficult to compare to another. This means price is no longer the overriding factor. Instead, it is the overall value you are offering.**

## Example of a possible 3 choices you could offer:

### Standard

Room must be cleared by the client, you will do basic prep and brush/roller the job. Expected time to complete 4 days. Includes free colour consultation. This is your most basic and cheapest service.

### Premium

You will clear the room using storage boxes, you will do full prep, including the use of a dustless sander and you will brush roller the job. Expected time to complete 4.5 days. Includes free colour consultation. They pay more because you are offering a better finish and giving them the extra service of clearing the room.

### Platinum

You will photograph the room to start. Clear it and then put it back to how it was (as best as possible). You will do full prep, including the use of a dustless sander. You will spray the job for the perfect finish, and it will save time. You will also offer a 3rd coat of paint for extra durability. This is not as time consuming when you are spraying. This is the most expensive option as they don't lift a finger. They get a better and more durable finish and they get the room back sooner. Plus when they see all the masking up and equipment you use, it will show the extra costs you've incurred on materials.

# Step 4 cont.

## Delivering the proposal

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Rule number one. Make sure you send the proposal on the time/date promised!

Also, try calling them 30 minutes before sending the proposal to make sure they are ready to sit down and go through it. Take them through it step by step to ensure they understand your process and how you got to the prices. If they are not ready to go through the proposal, try and rearrange to send it another time. You want to make sure they read and understand it. Not just skip to the end for the price.

Ensure they know what to do they if they want to go ahead with it. Explain the process for them. Can they call, email or text to confirm? Give them a call to action.

**Summary: Make sure you go through the proposal with the client, whether on the phone or in person. This is essential to make sure they recognise all the value you are offering.**

# Step 5

## Following up

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Once you've sent the proposal. Make a note in your diary to follow up. Make it a process that must happen. Give them a call and ask if they have any questions or concerns now that they've had time to digest the proposal. If they have decided to go with another decorator, be cheeky as ask for feedback as to why. Was it your price? Was it that the other company offered better solutions to their problems? Was it something more obscure? You never know until you ask, and this is the quickest and most effective way of improving your offering.

Why is following up important?

Quite simply, the more you follow up, the more deals you'll secure. When the demand for your product/service increases like this, you can be choosier on the work you do. If you are booked up way in advance and more work is still coming in, you can even consider increasing your prices. Before you know it, you are charging more and almost exclusively working for your ideal customers.

**Summary: Following up will mean an increase in sales. It always has and it always will. Make sure you do it as a matter of process, which will ultimately become a life-long habit.**

# Step 6

## Colour consultation

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This could/should be a free optional extra. It sets you apart from other decorators, it gives you more facetime with the client and it means you can nail down the colours before you start the job. Meaning you can shop around and get the best price, and you don't waste 2 hours in the local merchants halfway through a job!

Remember clients may be uncertain about a number of things to do with colours and it is very important to them as they will be spending a lot of time in that room. Use your experience and knowledge to put their mind at rest. It would also be worthwhile showing them some of your recent work. They might find it easier to visualise what their room may look like if you show them similar jobs you have worked on.

**Summary: Use your experience to help guide the customer on colour. Use this opportunity to show them some of your previous work. They may get inspiration from it!**

# Step 7

## Completing the work and after care

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### Starting the project:

You've offered a first-class service so far. This must continue. Clean clothes, tidy van, tidy workspace. Remember when you leave in the evening, the customer will 100% sneak a look at your progress. Make sure the place looks professional. You are by no means the cheapest solution for their decorating needs. They want that price to be validated. They need to be able to tell their friends, yes, they were expensive, but they are the best, and I got great value for money.

Remember to keep your client up to date on everything you do. Going to be late? Send them a text and let them know. If the customer is never there when you are, consider leaving a note at the end of each day explaining your progress and your plan of action for the next day. This takes 5 minutes, but can mean an awful lot to the client.

### After the work has been completed:

Now is the time to leave 2 business cards with them. One so they can call you for their next project, and one to pass to their friend. Ask for that referral!

Also, don't be afraid to ask for a testimonial, or a Trust pilot review. Set yourself apart from other companies.

Done a perfect job for someone who fits your 'Ideal Customer Profile' and every part of the sales process was spot on? Write up a case study on it and add it to your website.

**Summary: Use your time on the job to really get to know the customer. Done correctly it should lead to either more work from that client or solid referrals.**