

How businesses attract customers

A 60–75 minute speaking lesson built around Dollar Shave Club's launch advert. Practise explaining how a business wins first-time buyers, judging a campaign, and defending a marketing recommendation.



STUDENT HANDOUT

1 Warm Up

You sell razors online. Most customers buy a familiar brand from a shop. You cannot offer the lowest price forever. Choose the strongest opening message, then explain who it targets, why someone might click, and what might stop them buying.

1. Our razors have advanced technical features.

2. Good razors delivered to your door at a sensible price.

3. Switch brands today and get 50% off your first order.

4. Your own idea.

2 Useful language: From attention to a first order

Place each phrase at a stage of the customer journey. Some phrases could fit at more than one stage; explain your choice.

target audience • stand out • value proposition • word of mouth • landing page • convert visitors • customer acquisition cost • repeat purchase

Stage What the business needs to do Phrase

1

Decide which people it wants to reach

_____target audience

2

Give people a reason to notice it

_____stand out

3

Explain why its offer is worth choosing

_____value proposition

4

Send interested people to a page where they can act

_____landing page

5

Turn some visitors into buyers

_____convert visitors

6

Encourage buyers to tell other people

_____word of mouth

7

Bring buyers back for another order

_____repeat purchase

8

Check the cost of winning each new buyer

_____customer acquisition cost

Speak for 45 seconds: launch a product from your online shop and explain stages 1–5 using at least three phrases. Your teacher will ask one customer question.

3 The case: A razor advert people chose to watch

In 2012, Dollar Shave Club introduced an online razor subscription with a video featuring its founder, Michael Dubin. He walks through a warehouse, speaks directly to the camera and uses humour to make a simple offer memorable: customers can have razors delivered regularly instead of buying expensive blades in a shop.

This mattered because razors were hardly a new product. The company had to give people a reason to notice an unfamiliar seller and trust it enough to place an order. The advert made a direct argument about price and convenience, while its unusual style made people more likely to share it. Someone who enjoyed the joke could also quickly understand what the company wanted them to buy.

There was a risk. Some viewers could find the humour annoying or offensive, and a memorable advert would be useless if the website or delivery service disappointed new customers. The key question is: does the marketing simply get attention, or does it make buying feel like a good decision?



Score each factor from 1 (minor) to 5 (essential) for attracting a first customer. Defend your highest and lowest scores.

Factor Score 1-5

A clear price and offer

____5

Delivery convenience

____4

Humour and a distinctive personality

____5

An easy route from advert to order

____5

Which factor might help people remember the brand but fail to make them buy?

4 Video: Watch the launch advert

Dollar Shave Club — Our Blades Are F***ing Great (about 90 seconds):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUG9qYTJMsI>



The advert contains one prominent swear word and some adult humour.

Before viewing

1. What must the founder explain in the first 20 seconds to keep a potential customer watching?
2. Will the advert focus on the product, the customer's problem, or the company's personality?
3. What action should viewers be able to take afterwards?

After viewing

1. Mark what the advert communicates. Explain how it communicates each point.

☐ Customers can receive razors regularly.

The blades are described in detailed technical language. ☐

Familiar brands may cost more than necessary. ☐

The founder explains every delivery and cancellation step. ☐

The company wants to sound different from established competitors. ☐

1. What is the clearest reason to try the service?
2. What makes the advert memorable?
3. What question would a cautious buyer still have?
4. Would the same humour work for a Romanian online shop today? Which product category would suit it?
5. If many people watched but few ordered, where would you look for the problem first?

5 Language in use Describe a strategy precisely

Replace the vague words with one phrase from the bank. Say the revised sentence aloud.

reach the target audience • stand out from competitors • drive traffic to the website • convert visitors into customers • build customer loyalty • encourage repeat purchases

1. The video helped the company get noticed among other brands.

2. Sharing helped bring people to its website.

3. A clear offer could make visitors buy.

4. Reliable delivery could make customers buy again.

5. A consistent experience could make customers trust and stay with the brand.

Finish aloud: "An advert can attract attention, but to convert visitors, a business also needs ..." and "A promotion might bring in first-time buyers, but repeat purchases depend on ..."

6 Case challenge A small shop and a strong competitor



You work for a Romanian online shop selling practical home-office products. A large competitor has lower prices. Your shop has €1,200 for one month, a small customer list and good service. Website visits are low. You need new customers whose orders are likely to be profitable.

Choose two actions. Allocate the €1,200. Pitch your target audience, message, budget and one measure of success to the shop owner. Be ready to defend your choice.

Option · Main uncertainty

A

Three short videos showing real desk problems and product solutions

Will viewers visit the shop?

B

A large first-order discount through paid adverts

Will orders cover the discount and advert cost?

C

A modest reward when an existing customer refers a friend

Will enough customers share it?

D

Improve product pages, delivery information and checkout

Will enough visitors see the changes?

NEW INFORMATION: Visitors add products to baskets, but many leave when they see the delivery charge. You cannot remove it entirely. Revise your plan: change the advert, offer, website, or a combination? Explain the trade-off.

7 Your professional experience Interview evidence

Choose two questions. Use genuine examples from your seven years running an online shop. If you do not know exact figures, describe the result without inventing them.

1. How did customers discover your shop? Which channel brought people most likely to buy?

2. Tell me about a difficult product to sell. What did you change in its presentation, price or promotion?

3. How did you decide whether an advert or promotion was worth its cost?

4. What made customers return? How did you learn what they valued?

5. When did customers behave differently from what you expected? What did you do next?

Use this speaking structure: situation → decision → reason → result → what I learnt.

“When I ran my online shop, I noticed that I decided to ... because As a result, That experience taught me”

8 Final speaking task Recommend and defend



Job interview role-play. Your interviewer says: “We have a good product, but customers do not notice it. What would you do to attract them?”

Give a 90-second answer: target customer, message, one way to reach them, and a way to judge whether it works. Include one lesson from your shop experience.

The interviewer then challenges you: “Our competitor can spend five times more.” Then: “People saw the campaign, but sales did not improve.” Respond to both. Finish with what you would investigate first.

Exit line: Say one sentence you could genuinely use in a marketing interview to explain how you attracted customers to your own business.

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Teaching route

For 60 minutes, shorten the scoring discussion and choose two questions in section 7. For 75 minutes, use both viewings, challenge the budget in section 6 and repeat the final interview answer after feedback. Correct selectively during speaking and note useful reformulations.

Answers and useful interpretations

Section 2: 1 target audience; 2 stand out; 3 value proposition; 4 landing page; 5 convert visitors; 6 word of mouth; 7 repeat purchase; 8 customer acquisition cost. Accept defensible alternatives.

Section 4: The advert is a price-led offer told through comedy. It communicates recurring delivery, a challenge to the cost of familiar brands and a distinctive voice; detailed specifications and full terms are not its focus.

Section 5: 1 stand out from competitors; 2 drive traffic to the website; 3 convert visitors into customers; 4 encourage repeat purchases; 5 build customer loyalty. Ask where the spare phrase “reach the target audience” belongs.

Section 6: A+C or A+D can initially be defended. Once delivery costs emerge, show charges earlier, test a clear delivery threshold or bundle, and measure basket abandonment and profitability. “Free delivery” is not automatically profitable.

Language support

Attract customers means gain attention from potential buyers; acquire customers means gain new buyers. Convert means move people from one stage to another, such as visitor to buyer. Traffic means website visits. Conversion rate is the share that take the intended action. Customer acquisition cost is the spending divided by new customers gained; specify which spending is included.

Listen for: “make a promotion” → “run a promotion”; “make clients” → “attract or win customers”; “customers came back again” → “customers returned or made repeat purchases”. Ask for concrete results instead of “it was successful”.

Follow-up prompts

What would make you trust this seller enough to order?

Would that bring the right people or simply more people?

What would you measure after one week?

What could explain many visits but few orders?

Which example from your own shop supports your decision?

Stronger phrases for the student

1. We focused on customers who were most likely to benefit from ...
2. Our main selling point was ...
3. We wanted to stand out from larger competitors by ...
4. The campaign generated interest, but the website had to convert it into sales.
5. I tested the idea on a small scale before increasing the budget.
6. I compared the cost of attracting a customer with the value of their orders.
7. Customer feedback showed us that ...
8. We adjusted the offer when we noticed ...
9. That helped us encourage repeat purchases.
10. Running my own online shop taught me to connect marketing decisions with customer behaviour and actual sales.

Sources

Original Dollar Shave Club advert, published 6 March 2012: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUG9qYTJMsI>

Contemporary discussion of the campaign, Fast Company, 23 April 2012:

<https://www.fastcompany.com/1835082/3-marketing-takeaways-from-dollar-shave-clubs-fing-great-ad>