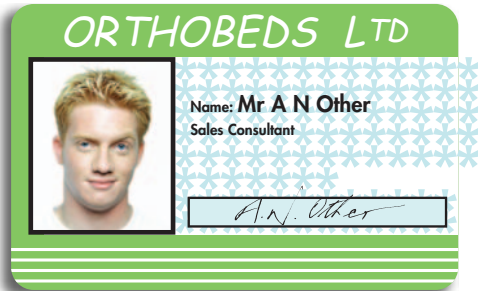
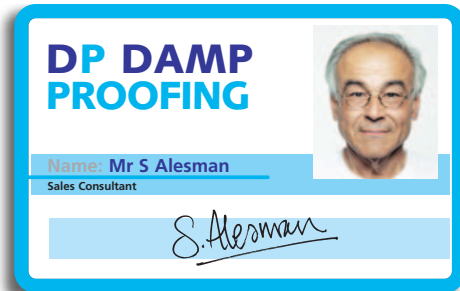


Your doorstep, your decision

Your guide to keeping control of doorstep sales



**'I'm on your doorstep.
I give you a present.
You give me a sale.'**



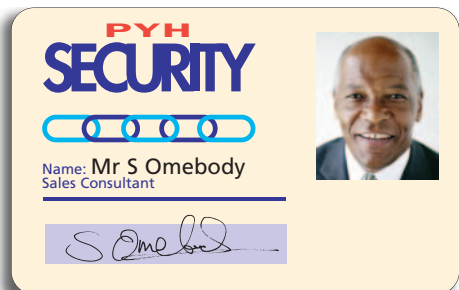
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interests are. I draw you in.
You can't say no.'**



**'I rush you into a decision
to buy now or lose a
special discount.'**



**'I get you to agree with me.
Then it's hard for you to
refuse the sale.'**



**'I tell you three people down
your road bought from me
last week.'**



**'I tell you that my products
are endorsed by experts to
make you feel secure.'**

What is doorstep selling?

Doorstep selling is when someone sells you goods or services in your home or on your doorstep. It can be convenient to buy on the doorstep – but you can be pressured into buying something you do not want or that is not good value for money by a salesperson using clever selling tactics. If this happens you are not always protected by the law.

You should always shop around.

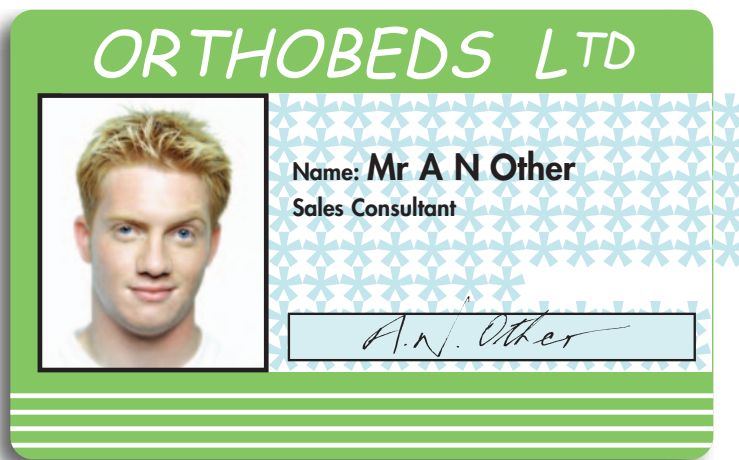
This guide shows you some of the tactics doorstep sellers use to persuade you to buy and explains your legal rights.

Remember you are not on your own finding it hard to resist salespeople – most people feel just like you.

Here is some advice on how to handle high pressure selling techniques.

Sales tactic 1

You're made to feel 'grateful'



**'I'm on your doorstep.
I give you a present.
You give me a sale.'**

**Remember: it's your doorstep,
your decision.**

How it works

The friendly salesperson turns up on your doorstep with a gift, maybe a plant or chocolates.

How they hope you'll react

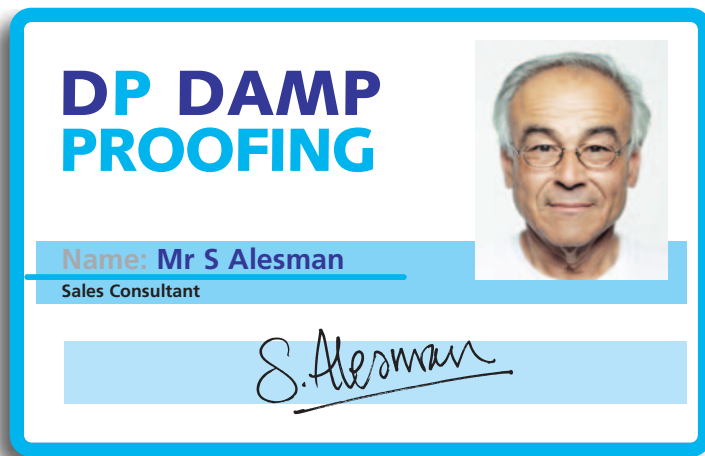
It seems rude not to invite the salesperson in – and because you've been given something, you feel you have to give something back.

How to react

- Don't forget this is a business transaction and you don't need to treat the seller like a friend.
- If you don't want them to come in – don't invite them, it is your home not their business premises.

Sales tactic 2

You're made to feel as if you have lots in common



‘I find out what your interests are. I draw you in. You can’t say no.’

Remember: it’s your doorstep, your decision.

How it works

The salesperson picks up on things you have in your home – perhaps photos of your family or hobbies and pretends that they are keen on the same things.

How they hope you’ll react

This is to gain your trust and build the ‘friendship’ – you’re more likely to buy from a friend than from a salesperson.

How to react

- Don’t get drawn into a conversation about your family or interests.
- Don’t forget this is a business transaction not a social call.

Sales tactic 3

You're made to feel as if there is a great sense of urgency



'I rush you into a decision to buy now or lose a special discount.'

Remember: it's your doorstep, your decision.

How it works

The salesperson warns you that there are hardly any left – and they've worked hard to get a special discount, just for you. They often pretend to 'check' with their boss, then say that if you don't order now you'll miss out.

How they hope you'll react

You're being pushed into making up your mind and signing a contract on the spot without any time to reflect. You'll feel grateful for the special treatment.

How to react

- Refuse to be taken in and say that you want time to consider, that you never buy on impulse.
- Remember the price quoted may really be far too high to start with – you won't know if you haven't shopped around beforehand.

Sales tactic 4

You're made to feel committed to the product – and that you'll lose face if you don't buy



'I get you to agree with me. Then it's hard for you to refuse the sale.'

Remember: it's your doorstep, your decision.

How it works

The salesperson is trained to get you to agree to a series of harmless statements. For example, 'Wouldn't it make life easier if you didn't have to struggle upstairs?' When you keep answering 'yes', you are starting to say 'yes' to the sale without realising it.

How they hope you'll react

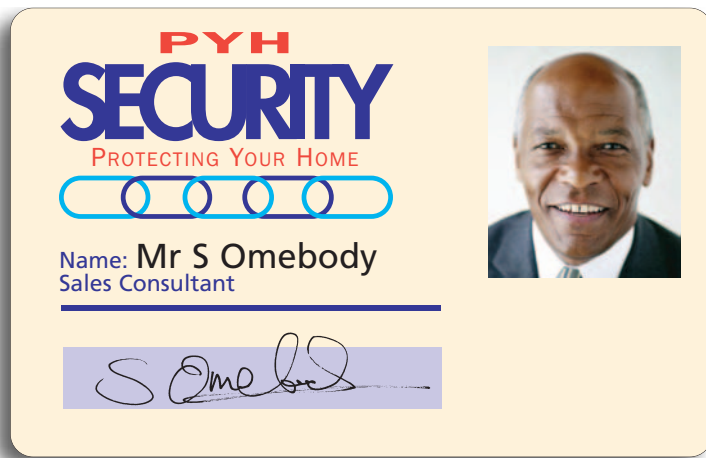
You'll feel too embarrassed not to buy when you've implied that you will and don't know how to back-track.

How to react

- Don't worry about thinking you sound foolish – it's a sales technique not a friendly conversation.
- Don't let them ask the questions. You ask them.
- If you don't have control, tell them to leave.

Sales tactic 5

You're made to feel that you will be just as happy as all the other contented consumers



'I tell you three people down your road bought from me last week.'

Remember: it's your doorstep, your decision.

How it works

The salesperson talks of lots of people like you who have bought the product.

How they hope you'll react

You'll feel reassured that you're getting a good deal.

How to react

- Focus on whether the price and product are right for you.

Sales tactic 6

You're made to feel as if the product/service is endorsed by an expert



'I tell you that my products are endorsed by experts to make you feel secure.'

Remember: it's your doorstep, your decision.

How it works

The salesperson will emphasise that the product or service has been thoroughly tested and is approved by a professional association, charity, celebrity or council.

How they hope you'll react

You're reassured by a credible endorsement.

How to react

- Check out the reference for yourself by phoning up the organisation concerned.

Legal protection

If you decide to buy

Always get things you've agreed with the salesperson in writing, ideally on the contract.

If you change your mind about your purchase, the legal protection you have depends on whether the visit was 'solicited' or 'unsolicited'. You solicit a call if you respond to an advert or ask them to visit.

If the visit was **solicited**, and you asked the salesperson to come, you do not have the right to cancel the contract. It's very important not to sign anything until you are quite sure the product or service is what you want and is the right price for you.

But if the visit was **unsolicited** and you were cold-called (someone called in person or they phoned you to make an appointment

without you asking them to) you have around seven days to change your mind – the 'cooling-off' period. Although you could have longer if the salesperson didn't mention your cancellation rights. You can cancel any contract that you've signed for goods and services above the value of £35.

Unless you need the work done urgently, do not agree for goods to be installed during the cooling off period as you may lose your right to cancel the contract.

If you do change your mind, act fast. Cancel in writing and get proof of cancellation – so keep a copy of an email or fax receipt or recorded delivery slip.

If you want more detailed advice, your local trading standards service or Citizens Advice Bureau may be able to help you.

Useful organisations

Telephone Preference Service

Telephone Preference Service is a free service that ensures your telephone number is not available to organisations who may telephone you with offers and information you do not want to get. This stops unsolicited telephone calls which can lead to an unwanted visit.

To register call 020 7291 3320 or fax 020 7323 4226 or do it online at www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps

Below is a list of organisations that can give advice and information to help older people.

On assistive products such as stairlifts and adjustable beds:

Your GP or an occupational therapist can give you information on what products are most suitable for you and how to get hold of them.

Organisations that can give you information on assistive products are:

Disabled Living Foundation

Impartial advice and information on large and small equipment, including stairlifts, beds, bath seats and wheelchairs.

Helpline Tel: 0845 130 9177

Mon-Fri 10am-4pm

(charged at local rate)

Textphone: 020 7432 8009

www.dlf.org.uk

Disabled Living Centres

There are 49 centres that you can visit to look at an assortment of assistive products – a list can be found on their website or by calling their head office.

Tel: 0161 834 1044

Fax: 0870 770 2867

Textphone: 0870 770 5813

www.assist-uk.org

On gas and electricity supplies:

Energywatch

Energywatch can provide advice on a range of energy issues, such as saving money by switching suppliers and free services available for the elderly and disabled. They can also help to resolve complaints against energy suppliers.

Tel: 0845 906 0708

Textphone: 18001 08459 06 07 08

www.energywatch.org.uk

On consumer rights:



Consumer Direct

Consumer Direct is a telephone and online advice and information service for consumers in Great Britain, managed by the Office of Fair Trading in partnership with the Trading Standards Service.

Tel: 08454 04 05 06

Mon-Fri 8am-6.30pm

Sat 9am to 1pm

(charged at local rate)

Textphone: 020 7242 8159

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Useful organisations

On general help and advice for older people:

Age Concern

For a free information sheet on consumer advice and where to get it, call Age Concern Information Line.

Freephone 0800 009 966

(Daily 8am-7pm)

www.ace.org.uk

Typetalk facilities available

Help the Aged

Help the Aged are committed to addressing the issues that matter to older people.

Tel: 020 7278 1114

www.helptheaged.org.uk

And finally... three things to remember

1 Check the seller's identity

Were you expecting them? If not, be very cautious. If you are interested in what they are selling, you can ask them to come back at another time that is more convenient for you (for example, when you have someone else with you).

Always ask for an identity card and look at it carefully. The important thing is to be sure they are who they say they are. Check their identity by ringing their company using a number from the phonebook (not a number they give you).

2 Take control – you ask the questions

If you decide to have a meeting with a doorstep seller, make sure you are in control, not the salesperson. Remember it is a business situation, not a chat with a friend. Be aware of the six sales techniques, shown in this guide.

3 Don't sign on the spot – shop around

How do you know if the price is right? Check with other companies offering the same product first. Don't be hurried into a decision even if they offer you a discount. The discount might be on a price that is too high in the first place. If you don't know where to go for other sources of information check our useful organisations list in this guide.

This information is available in other formats and languages on request. Please ring 0800 389 3158.

This leaflet sets out general guidelines – it is not a complete description of the law. All legal rules have exceptions and variations. How the law applies to you depends on the facts of your case. If you think you have a legal claim and cannot get a satisfactory answer from the trader get advice from Consumer Direct or a Citizens Advice Bureau or a solicitor.

Published by the Office of Fair Trading
Printed in the UK on paper comprising
75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp
Product code OFT733a
Edition 11/06 Printed 11/06/30,000
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