SELF-PACED VIDEO COURSE

The Decision Gap

Why buyers stall — and the psychology behind every lost deal in technical sales.

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4	Self-paced	Lifetime
Video modules	Learn on your schedule	Access included

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

What you are holding and why it matters

This is not a theory document. There are no borrowed models from a business school curriculum and no research cited for the sake of credibility. Every concept in this course has been tested in real conditions — on live accounts, in front of real buyers, in industries where getting it wrong has a measurable cost.

The Decision Gap is built around a simple observation: most technical sales professionals lose deals they should win — not because their product is wrong or their price is too high, but because the buyer's decision-making process is more complex, more psychological, and more human than any product feature sheet accounts for.

This course gives you the framework to understand that process — and to change specific things in how you sell, starting with your next customer visit.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

— **Field sales reps**

You visit sites, talk to engineers, and need to convert technical knowledge into orders. This gives you the psychological edge your competitors don't have.

— **Technical engineers in sales roles**

You know the product but buying decisions aren't made on spec sheets alone. This bridges the gap between technical competence and commercial outcome.

— **Sales managers and directors**

You need your team to close more of what they open. Understanding buyer psychology is the missing piece in most technical sales coaching programmes.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide gives you an overview of what each module covers and what you will be able to do after completing it. Read it before you start the course to understand where it is going — and keep it alongside the video modules as a reference. Each module ends with an application exercise. Do not skip it. The exercise is where the learning happens.

CONTENTS

What this course covers

Frameworks used in this course: GAP Selling · Loss Aversion Reframe · Trust Audit · Friction Map

MODULE 1 OF 4

1

The Invisible Barrier

Why buyers feel unsafe before they decide

Learning outcome: *After this module, you will be able to identify the moment a buyer's decision-making shuts down — and know exactly what to do about it.*

THE PROBLEM

You have done everything right. The application is diagnosed correctly, the product is specified, the price is competitive. The buyer says they will get back to you. They do not. Most sales people assume this is a price problem. It almost never is. It is a safety problem. The buyer does not feel safe enough to commit.

THE CONCEPT

Buyers do not just weigh up the product. They weigh up the consequences of getting it wrong. People only take risks — including the risk of making a decision — when they feel it is safe to be wrong. In a buying context, that means committing to a supplier without fear of being blamed if it goes wrong. Buyers do not buy solutions. They buy protection from the consequences of a bad decision.

REAL EXAMPLE

> *A plant engineer at a food processing site had been running a competitor's shaft seal for four years. Not because it was the best seal — it was not — but because switching meant owning the decision. The moment a site trial with full technical backup was offered, the decision became simple. The risk had been taken off him.*

APPLICATION EXERCISE

Before your next customer visit: identify one account where a decision has stalled. Write down what the buyer is actually risking if they make the wrong call. Then write down one thing you could offer that removes that risk — a trial, a guarantee, a phased rollout. Bring that offer to the next conversation.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Your job is not to convince the buyer the product is right. It is to make it safe for them to say yes.

Continue to Module 2 of 4

MODULE 2 OF 4

2

The Freeze

Why technical buyers stall even when the answer is obvious

Learning outcome: *After this module, you will be able to reframe your value proposition around what the buyer is already losing — not what they might gain.*

THE PROBLEM

The spec is perfect. The price is fair. The application is exactly what you solve every week. But the customer goes quiet. You follow up twice. Still nothing. You are not losing on value — you are losing on fear. The fear of getting it wrong hurts twice as much as the benefit of getting it right.

THE CONCEPT

Loss aversion: the pain of a potential loss is roughly twice as powerful as the pleasure of an equivalent gain. Applied to industrial buying — switching supplier and getting it wrong is twice as painful as the benefit of a better component, faster delivery, or a lower price. This is why "our product is 15% more efficient" often fails to move a buyer, but "your current approach is costing you this much per week" lands harder. Same data. Different framing. The loss frame wins every time.

REAL EXAMPLE

> *A maintenance manager at a chemical plant was re-ordering the same PTFE gaskets every six months — a known workaround. The shift happened when the focus moved from selling the upgrade to quantifying the loss. Six months of replacements plus one unplanned shutdown cost more than the engineered solution in a single year. Once he saw what he was losing, the decision made itself.*

APPLICATION EXERCISE

Pick a stalled opportunity in your pipeline. Write down the gain you have been selling ("our seal lasts longer / our service is faster"). Now rewrite it as a loss the customer is currently experiencing. Bring the loss frame to your next call and note how the conversation changes.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Do not just show them what they will gain. Show them what they are already losing. Loss moves faster than gain.

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MODULE 3 OF 4

3

You Are the Product

Why trust matters more than specification

Learning outcome: *After this module, you will be able to assess and systematically build trust across your key accounts — before you need the order.*

THE PROBLEM

Two suppliers quote the same component for the same application. Both are technically competent. Both are priced within 5% of each other. One wins the order. It is rarely the better specification that decides it. Most buyers in industrial and engineering markets do not have the time to forensically evaluate every proposal. So they use a shortcut: which supplier do I trust?

THE CONCEPT

When logic is too complex or the stakes feel high, buyers default to a simpler question: do I trust this person? Trust is a compressed judgement about reliability, competence, and consequence. In technical sales, the salesperson often carries more trust signals than the product itself. Your track record, your follow-through, how you handle a difficult question, whether you admit uncertainty — these are the signals buyers are reading. If they do not trust you, the specification does not matter.

REAL EXAMPLE

> *Early in my career I was outsold on a mechanical seal contract by a competitor with a technically inferior product. The incumbent rep had ten years of history on that site — every shutdown, every callout, every emergency order. From that point I treated every visit, every piece of advice given for free, every follow-up call as a trust deposit. You do not withdraw trust on the day you need the order. You build it on every visit before.*

APPLICATION EXERCISE

For your top three accounts: rate the trust level 1 to 10. Ask — what is that number based on? Frequency of contact? Technical advice given? Problems solved? Now identify one specific action you could take in the next two weeks to move each score one point higher. That is your trust-building plan for this quarter.

KEY TAKEAWAY

When buyers are uncertain, they do not evaluate products — they evaluate people. Make sure they are evaluating you at your best.

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MODULE 4 OF 4

4

Make It Easy to Say Yes

Reducing friction at the decision point

Learning outcome: *After this module, you will be able to identify and reduce the friction in your own sales process — with a practical exercise you can apply this week.*

THE PROBLEM

You have a good product, a qualified prospect, and a clear need. Then you send a twelve-page technical proposal, ask them to complete a supplier registration form, and request a meeting with their procurement team. Then wonder why the order has not come. Complexity does not signal quality in a buying context. It signals risk. The harder it is to buy from you, the safer the competitor looks — even if their product is worse.

THE CONCEPT

Things that are easy to process feel trustworthy. Things that require effort feel risky. Every extra step, every jargon-heavy document, every unnecessary process between the buyer and the order is a friction point that your competitor benefits from. The hard sell does not fail because it is pushy. It fails because it is cognitively threatening. Ease is a competitive advantage — and most technical sales teams have never thought about it that way.

REAL EXAMPLE

> *A maintenance buyer told me once that the reason he stayed with a small supplier was not price or product range — it was that their ordering process took ninety seconds. My onboarding process at the time involved a four-page credit application and a two-week account setup. I overhauled it. Conversion rate on new accounts improved significantly. The product had not changed. The friction had.*

APPLICATION EXERCISE

Map the last five orders you won and lost. Count the number of steps a buyer had to take between first contact and placing an order. Identify the two highest-friction steps — the ones most likely to cause hesitation or delay. What would it take to remove or simplify one of them? That is your process improvement for this quarter.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The easiest supplier to buy from often wins — regardless of who has the better product. Reduce friction like it is a sales target.

WHAT COMES NEXT

You have completed The Decision Gap

If you have worked through all four modules and completed the exercises, you have not just read about buyer psychology — you have already started to apply it. The exercises are not optional extras. They are where the learning becomes behaviour.

The next step is deliberate practice. Take the one account from your pipeline where a decision has stalled the longest. Apply all four frameworks to it — safety, loss aversion, trust, and friction. You will almost certainly identify at least one thing you have not yet tried. That is your next action.

CONTINUE YOUR DEVELOPMENT

→ **Leadership & Management for Technical Professionals**

Six-module course covering the transition from expert to leader — delegation, pipeline reviews, strategic thinking, and leading through change.

→ **Sealing Excellence Programme™**

Technical sealing knowledge for field sales professionals and engineers — O-rings, FFKM, gaskets, mechanical seals, and application troubleshooting.

→ **GAP Selling & Commercial Frameworks**

Andrew's proprietary selling frameworks — ORDER and SCREAM — applied to industrial and engineering sales environments.

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