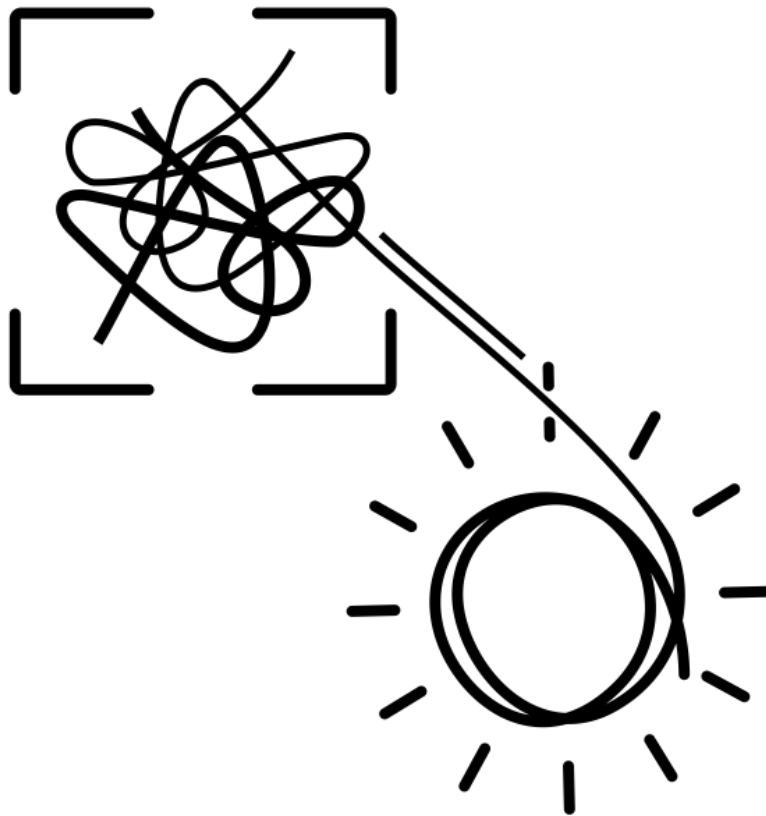




OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



# *Better the Buyer you know!*



*A Sales Masterclass by Dr Denis O’Hora and Professor Jonathan Levie of University of Galway in partnership with the Sales Professionals Network  
4<sup>th</sup> of October, 2023*



An Roinn Breisoideachais agus Ardoideachais,  
Taighde, Nuálaíochta agus Eolaíochta  
Department of Further and Higher Education,  
Research, Innovation and Science



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# Regulatory Focus Theory

## Introduction

### What is regulatory focus?

Regulatory focus theory was developed by Prof E. Tory Higgins of Columbia University New York to explain people's motivations when making decisions.

#### *Not this one...*



#### *This one!*



Your focus describes your goals compared to your current situation. Higgins identifies two focuses:

#### **Promotion Focus (Wants):**

This describes when you are motivated to get **more** than you have now. A **gain** focus. (*gains vs non-gains*)

#### **Prevention Focus (Needs):**

This describes when you are motivated to **keep** what you have now. A **loss** focus. (*loss vs non-loss*)

### Think about it

*Is your customer looking to **get an edge** and **experience something new** or are they concerned with **protecting themselves**?*

Image credit: *insight* by Olena Panasovska from [Noun Project](#) (CC BY 3.0)

### ***Exercise – Measuring your Promotion and Prevention Focus***

Most people have a dominant or default focus; one you rely on more than the other. In this exercise, we will do a survey to find out our own dominant regulatory focus. There are no right or wrong answers.

Read each statement and tick the box to say whether you agree with it or not. It starts with *strongly disagree* and goes all the way to *strongly agree*. Take the number in the box you ticked and put it in the column at the side so you can add them up.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score
<b><i>Promotion Focus</i></b>								
1. I feel like I have made progress toward being successful in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. When I see an opportunity for something I like, I get excited right away.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. I see myself as someone who is primarily striving to reach my “ideal self”—to fulfil my hopes, wishes, and aspirations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. <i>When it comes to achieving things that are important to me, I find that I don’t perform as well as I would ideally like to do.</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b><i>Promotion Total</i></b>								

<i>Prevention Focus</i>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Score
6. I usually obeyed rules and regulations that were established by my parents.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. <i>Not being careful enough has gotten me into trouble at times.</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	
8. I worry about making mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. I frequently think about how I can prevent failures in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. I see myself as someone who is primarily striving to become the self I "ought" to be—fulfill my duties, responsibilities and obligations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
<b><i>Prevention Total</i></b>								

# The Effects of Goals

Even though we have a typical (default) way of doing things, we do not always have the same focus. What you are trying to do in a situation will activate your different focuses.

Here are some ways to diagnose your current regulatory focus. It will change with your goal.

	Prevention-focused (Need)	Promotion-focused (Want)
<b>Goal is to...</b>	protect, renew the status quo	improve upon the status quo
<b>Achieving your goal will feel...</b>	satisfying, complete	exciting, fun
<b>Missing your goal will feel...</b>	worrying, unsettling	boring, useless
<b>Options are ...</b>	annoying	attractive, <i>even if not chosen</i>
<b>Information-seeking motive</b>	vigilance	interest
<b>Price sensitive?</b>	more*	less

## Think about it

*Which regulatory focus do you think is stronger for you now?*

- *What does this tell you about your goal?*

*Which is usually stronger when you are selling?*

*Which is usually stronger for your buyer?*

# Regulatory Fit

When we, or more importantly, our customer is operating with a particular focus, we like to achieve our goals in a way that matches our motivation.

This is **regulatory fit** and it is when the *means matches the motivation*.

	Prevention-focused (Need)	Promotion-focused (Want)
<b>Fit</b> with brand messaging	comforting, serious, loss-framing	exciting, fun, gain-framing
<b>Fit</b> with the style of message delivery	vigilant	eager
<b>Fit</b> with a product	defend against threats, maintain security, and avoid losses	opportunities to grow, advance, and approach gains
<b>Fit</b> with the retail environment	scientific, pharmacies, ordered	artistic, boutique clothing stores, chaotic, sensual
<b>Fit</b> with the process of reaching a position	satisficing (enough is enough), stick with known	optimizing (I want the best), explore the unknown

## Think about it

*When you are looking to get something fixed, what approach fits best for you?*

*When you are looking for a buzz or inspiration, what approach fits best for you?*

*Is your customer looking to **get an edge** and **experience something new** or are they concerned with **protecting themselves**?*

*How might you change your approach to fit with their motivation?*

# Know your Buyer

How well do you understand your customer? Could you complete this exercise?  
Fill in the customer persona board for a “typical” customer type (persona) in numerical order, using the guide below.  
Concentrate on sections 1,2 and 3 for this workshop – you can complete the rest later.  
What insights can you glean about your customer’s regulatory focus and how you should adjust your selling process to fit?

<p><b>2. Persona's Goals</b></p> <p>Define a few core goals this persona you will be selling to must achieve.</p>	<p><b>1. Persona</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name some ideal customers who are representative of one customer persona.</li><li>• If you can't name them, describe them: what have they got in common?</li></ul>	<p><b>4. Your Solution / Value Proposition</b></p> <p>List a few key solution / value proposition offerings that <i>your</i> offering brings to bear.</p>
<p><b>3. Pain Points</b></p> <p>List the main pain points that the persona is suffering from today</p> <p>Try this thought experiment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If your offering did not exist what pain would the persona suffer from?</li></ul>	<p><b>6. Proof Point or Customer Quote</b></p> <p>Write down a compelling proof point that your offerings match the benefits sought OR a customer quote that can be backed up with evidence or a reference call.</p>	<p><b>5. Feature Mapping</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do your offerings (platform, product, or services), capabilities or content map to the desired solution proposition?</li><li>• How do these map onto the benefits that your customer persona is seeking to take their pain away?</li></ul>

# Customer Persona Board

**2. Persona's Goals**

**1. Persona**

**4. Your Solution /  
Value Proposition**

**3. Pain Points**

**6. Proof Point or  
Customer Quote**

**5. Feature Mapping**



## *Points to Ponder*

Do you work best when selling products or services that speak to promotion-focused customers or prevention-focused customers?

What about sales staff who report to you?

Do your sales staff know how to generate regulatory fit with their buyers, especially if the buyers typically have a different focus (dealing with finance or safety professionals)?

How might you use regulatory focus theory in hiring sales people or seeking a new opportunity in sales?



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Click here to listen to our  
podcast on Selling for Founders

# Selling for Founders

## Micro-credential at University of Galway

This Micro-credential will help you to become proficient in founder selling: communicating your vision for your product/service and understanding how others may value your new offering.

- Are you a new business founder with a great product or service idea, but you don't know who to sell to or how to sell it?
- Are you an established business owner and working on a new product or service to bring to market and need to revisit your customer pipeline and sales strategy?
- Are you a creative professional Solopreneur with a passion for creativity but no sales experience or not enough customers?

Research shows that founder selling is critical to new venture development. Yet, entrepreneurs are often unprepared for this challenge. By the end of this course students will have a sales strategy for their business to elevate their sales journey.



### Course Facts

ECTS: 5

NFQ Level: 9

Duration: 8 weeks, part-time

Mode of study: Blended learning

Fees: €650\*

Start date: January 10th, 2024

Application Closing Date: Nov 24th

The mode of study for this module is Blended. Assessment will be carried out on a continuous basis.

[universityofgalway.ie/micro-credentials](https://universityofgalway.ie/micro-credentials)

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