

Closing the sale ... turning Shoppers into Buyers

Why does closing the sale evoke such emotion in the hearts and minds of salespeople?

The purpose of your sales presentation is to get the customer to say “I’ll take it,” long before you have to ask if they’ll buy it. However, when the customer doesn’t say he’ll take it on his own, it is up to you to ask him for the sale.

In the United States, of 100 sales presentations made by retail salespeople, the following statistics continue to hold true:

- **20 percent of the time, customers say “I’ll take it” on their own.**
- **20 percent of the time, the salesperson asks for the sale.**
- **60 percent of the time, no attempt is made to close the sale.**

Here are a few tried-and-true professional approaches that can work well for you in most selling situations.

The either/or Close

either/or questions discourage the customer from saying no to your request for the sale. Instead of saying, “Would you like to buy it” (to which any customer can readily answer yes or no), ask them if they would like to buy “X” or if they would like to buy “Y.” Or, would they like to pay with “X” or pay with “Y?”

By giving your customers several ways to tell you they want the merchandise, you enhance your chances of getting a yes answer and closing the sale. All it takes are simple questions like, “Would you like to pay with cash or charge?” This is especially appropriate for customers who are ready to buy, but just need to be prompted.

Customer: “I think I like this bedroom better than the other one.”

Salesperson: “I agree with you. It will look great in your new home. By the way, would you like it delivered this weekend or should we have it sent next week after you’ve completed moving into your new home?”

Customer: “I’ll take it this weekend.”

By agreeing to take it, the customer is saying yes to the closing question.

The Reflexive Close

The “reflexive close” is a straightforward method that works because it turns the question back to the customer. Suppose you’re working with a couple who loves a leather sofa. You have successfully demonstrated its value, and now you feel they are waiting to be asked to buy.

If one of them asks, “Can you have the leather sofa delivered by Wednesday?” most salespeople will simply say, “Yes.” Even if you know it can be delivered by Wednesday, don’t say it. Instead, immediately respond with a closing question such as, “Would you like delivery on Wednesday?” or “What time could we deliver on Wednesday?”

If he gives a positive response, you’ve made the sale.

The Ask-For-It Close

The “ask for it” close can often provide the most effective means of pushing an indecisive customer over the fence.

When customers can’t decide on a purchase, sometimes you’ve got to relax, smile, laugh a bit and ask them to buy.

Start with a bold question that asks the customer, “So, would you like to buy it?” Do this with a bit of humor. Most customers will appreciate your candor and enjoyment of the situation. Consider this example:

Customer: “I’m sorry to take up so much of your time, but I can’t make up my mind.”

Salesperson: “No problem. I’ll make it up for you. Shall I gift wrap it?”

Have some fun with this one. Your enthusiasm and enjoyment on the sales floor will be readily apparent to your customers and will most likely be transmitted to everyone in the store.

The Add-On Close

This is an outstanding technique because it endeavors to both sell and item and add on to it at the same time. Basically, it's like asking, "What do you think about this with that?" "What do you think about the tables with this sofa group?" or "What do you think about the chest to go with the bedroom group?" Think of it as an endless window of opportunity to close the sale.

Third Party Reference Close

The Third Party Reference Close is intended to add customer confidence when it may still be lacking. Try this: Let your customer know that someone else you know bought it and is very satisfied with the purchase. Knowing someone else has tested the waters gives customers' confidence to do the same.

The Assumptive Close

If a customer displays little of no sign of resistance during your presentation ... then assume they are buying ... ask how when they would like if delivered or how they want to pay. It's a bold move but it tells the customer you are done talking and the sale is over.

The "To the Bone" Close

Everyone has haggled with a customer over price at one time or another. Few sales people know how to use this situation to their advantage. This close can appease your price-driven customer by making them feel you are trying to get the best possible price. By showing you are trying to get the best price you get the customer emotionally involved in the sale ... The more emotional the customer gets about the a piece of merchandise, the easier it will be to sell that merchandise. If you say NO we don't discount, then you completely cut off communication with the customer and probably will leave without buying.

The Penalty Close

Penalty closing statements come in the form of: "Our sale ends today", "This is the last one in stock", it probably won't be here tomorrow". These statements penalize the customer for buying at your store. Instead try something like this ... This is the last one I have in stock. I certainly don't expect it to sell before tomorrow, but I wanted to let you know ... or if you don't have time to purchase it now, why put it on hold.

Personality Conflicts and Turning Over The Sale

Personality conflicts, lack of knowledge, customer hang-ups regarding your looks, clothes, smell, too old, too young, too conservative, too trendy, doesn't understand your language ... it happens to the best of salespeople and is out of your control ... you owe it to the store to turn the sale over to someone who may have a better chance of selling this particular customer.

How to Turn Over a Sale

The most important element when you're getting ready to turn over a sale is to hand the customer to an Expert. Don't wait for the customer's permission ... just do it. Explain you are bringing someone over who might better be able to answer questions about the merchandise, Politely introduce your customer to the other salesperson and Move Away.

NO THANKS, I'M JUST LOOKING!