

Prove your value, earn the sale

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DELICATE BALANCE: Don't leave your customers hanging - establish trust, be positive and confident and you'll both win from the deal. *Photo: iStockphoto*



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However good your product or service is, the client needs to be sold on you first.

It never ceases to amaze me how many people still ask me the best way to 'close a sale'.

This is one of the biggest misconceptions in sales. It's not a technique; it's not a manipulation; it's not something that you wait until the end of your presentation to do; it's not something that requires intimate timing.

You don't have to be afraid of being rejected.

What you have to do is have an intelligent and engaging conversation with someone who is looking to buy you and your product or service - a conversation that involves value, a win for them, a visualised outcome, and an understanding that the sale is made emotionally and then justified logically.

That's a far cry from 'closing'.

If the sale doesn't start right, it will never end right.

'Close the sale' is the wrong thought process. The prospective customer is making his or her decision as the sales call progresses.

If you're really wanting to complete the sale - also known as 'getting the order' and 'creating an atmosphere in which the customer will buy' - there are questions you must answer for yourself in order to increase the chances the sale can be yours.

Caution: When you ask yourself these questions, and your own answers come up short of mastery, it's an indication of why you lose sales. The better and stronger you answer each one, the more likely you are to make the sale.

Think about your last 10 sales calls, and ask yourself ...

- o How prepared were you in terms of the customer?
- o How ready were you to make a sale?
- o How friendly were you?
- o How enthusiastic were you?
- o How emotionally engaging were you?
- o How intellectually engaging were you?
- o How self-confident were you?
- o How relatable were you?
- o How compelling was your presentation?
- o How different were you perceived to be?
- o How valuable were you perceived to be?

- o How believable were you?
- o How trustworthy were you perceived to be?

Close the sale? It's not an action. It's a culmination and sum total of the elements that makes a favourable decision possible.

The close of a sale is a delicate balance between your words and deeds, and their thoughts and perceptions. And a sale is always made - either you sell them on 'yes', or they sell you on 'no'.

Secret: You give me a prepared, friendly, enthusiastic, emotionally-engaging, intellectually-engaging, unique, valuable, compelling, believable, self-confident, relatable, trustworthy salesperson ... and I'll give you a sale.

No close needed.

It is not the responsibility of the salesperson to close the sale, it is the responsibility of the salesperson to:

- o engage the prospect;
- o prove value to the prospect;
- o prove differentiation to the prospect; and
- o earn the sale.

There have been more words written about closing the sale than any other aspect of the selling process or the sales cycle. Most of it is manipulative rubbish. Most of it centres on your ability to push the prospect into a corner and make them feel pressured to make a decision. That pressure will often result in a 'no', or some kind of stall that will ultimately result in a 'no'.

I've just given you an accurate dose of just who is responsible for making a sale, and how it should be completed.

Note well: By using this approach to selling you have just eliminated all of the silly objections and stalls. Price too high, need to think it over, we all meet next week and will decide then, call me next Tuesday, send me a proposal etc.

Yes, I too have written widely on 'closing the sale'. You can find it in The Sales Bible, The Little Red Book of Selling, The 21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling, and various blog posts and webinars. All of that information is in harmony with my philosophy of zero manipulation and build a trusting relationship.

The key: Be comfortable with yourself. If you're in a selling situation and you aren't feeling the love, or feeling the comfort, or feeling the relationship, or feeling the mutual communication ... then the best thing to do is back off, and be truthful. Truth will win you more sales than manipulation. All you have to do to change and improve your outcome is change your mindset from 'close' to 'earn'.

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