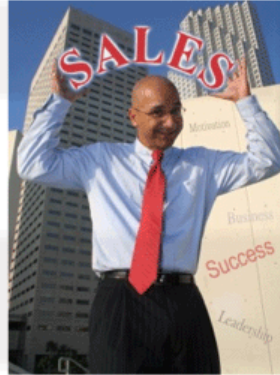


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How to Sell Without Using Closing Strategies

by Victor Antonio G.

Many of us have walked away from a sales meeting or sales pitch kicking ourselves on our backside for not having succeeded in closing a deal we knew was well within our reach. And then we begin to analyze and over-analyze what went wrong. Upon further mental investigation we reflect on all the things we should've said and all the things we shouldn't have said. You then come to the realization that maybe, just maybe, you should've planned better for that meeting or sales pitch.

We as salespeople today have been conditioned to spew forth features and benefits all over the potential client and then close them. We are armed with a mini-arsenal of favorite closing techniques which we bring to bear on any unsuspecting client (i.e., victim) that crosses our sales path. And when these choice closing techniques don't work, our confusion turns into desperation and we further jeopardize the sale by unknowingly inserting foot-in-mouth (i.e., saying the wrong thing) or pressuring the client into a decision they're not ready to make (i.e., being too pushy).

The root of the problem lies in the obvious fact that you've learned to 'close' a sale, but you haven't mastered the art of selling. There is a vast difference between learning how to close and learning how to sell. The best sales people don't focus their attention on closing a deal but on understanding why the client might not be willing to buy and then work towards assuaging any concerns or doubts that may prevent the sales from being brought to a successful conclusion with a gentle nudge and not a hard, high-pressure close.

Let's shift our attention for a moment away from closing strategies and techniques. Let's shelve for the time being the mindless dictum of ABC (Always Be Closing) and refocus our time and effort on creating a sales opportunity. How? By learning how to block objections before they manifest themselves verbally we can increase our chances of closing more deals.

Here's some insight. When a client makes a verbal objection, they have stated their concern aloud. That means, that unless the salesperson can minimize or eliminate that concern, no closing technique you use will work; the sale simply won't happen. In sales, what we never want is for the client to verbalize an objection. Once verbalized and made public, we find ourselves on the defensive trying to convince the client otherwise. I go back to a favorite saying I once heard, if you're explaining yourself, you're losing the conversation.

Let's rethink how we sell for a moment. What if we could prevent the client from verbalizing an objection, would we be in a better position to close a sale? Yes! Would that change the dynamics of the conversation? Absolutely!

When a client is able to resolve their concern mentally based on the information you've provided, the client will be more agreeable because he sees the answer to his concerns coming from himself and not from an external source (a salesperson). If we can get the client to answer his own questions, we will be in a better position to close the deal because we're not trying to convince him; he's already convinced himself. What I'm getting to can be summarized as follows, let's focus 90% of our time on objection prevention (i.e., before the objection is verbalized) and spend the remaining 10% of our time nudging (closing) the client to the obvious conclusion of buying from us.

Practice Objection Prevention

Step 1: Make a list of all the possible objections a client could possibly come up with to not buy from you.

Step 2: For each objection, list one or two ways that you can block those objections (i.e., objection blockers).

Step 3: Weave the objection blockers into your presentation using examples, stories or fictitious scenarios by stating a problem and then showing how your product or service can resolve it.

Step 4: Where you can, substantiate each objection blocker with an example, quote a statistic, share a testimonial, or show tangible proof.

The above outline makes the assumption that you know your client base well enough to understand and anticipate the types of objections that will be brought up based on passed experience. If you are new in sales or to a position in sales, begin to build your database of objection knowledge by talking to your peers or other successful sales people in your field and ask them to share with you what types of objections are most common.

If at the end of the sales process you've covered all the client's objections and have answered them satisfactorily, there's not much left to do but ask for the order.

Victor Antonio is a sales trainer and keynote speaker with a BSEE, MBA and 20 years in the business of selling. For more information about his seminar, Sales Influence: How to Get People to Buy What You're Selling, go to www.SalesInfluence.com.