

Closing time

By [Dan Norman](#) | Published July 21, 2009

Top Ten Selling

Throughout my career I have made a science of learning how the very best sales people became successful and how they sustained their success. Sustained success is the key. We all know the “one-hit wonder” who sold a year’s supply of toilet paper to a hotel chain in January and made her quota for the entire year. I screened these people out and focused on those who had sustained performance.

Often I would bring groups of sales superstars together to listen to them talk about the fundamentals of their success. I remember a meeting that I held in Boca Raton, Fla. with ten of the best salespeople at BellSouth Mobility. In this particular meeting, the dominant discussion topic was “Closing the Sale!”

One of the sales representatives said, “Closing, when the time is right, is the most important part of the sales process and is the secret to my success. Realizing that changed me from good to great in terms of sales results. I learned it one Saturday morning about three years ago. I had wanted a new BMW 325 for years. I had money in my savings account, all my bills were paid, I owned a nice house and I was financially comfortable. I had been to the BMW dealership every Saturday for a month. My sales representative called me on Friday and told me the exact car I wanted had arrived. I got up Saturday and was at the dealership before it opened, checkbook in my back pocket. I drove it, we negotiated the price and I was ready to sign. My salesperson pulled the paperwork together and asked me to come in and sit down. Suddenly, pen in hand, I was having second thoughts. I had the money. I wasn’t risking anything; it wasn’t a 7-series for crying out loud, it was just a little 325. I just froze and couldn’t take the next step and sign. Everything was right, I was just having second thoughts about spending that much money. I put the pen down and told my salesperson I needed to think about it.”

He said, “OK, I understand. Give me a call when you’ve decided.”

“The next day I decided that I would go back and buy the car. I called my salesperson and was horrified and extremely disappointed to hear that they had sold the car, my car, three hours after I had left the dealership the previous day.

“What I learned,” said the sales representative “was that even when everything is right, people are hesitant to part with their money. If you, the sales representative, have listened well, provided the right product, right solution and the right price, you have a responsibility to yourself *and* your customer to close the sale. I blame my salesperson for my losing that car. Had he just reviewed the facts with me and asked me to sign the order, I would have. I just needed a review and a push.”

The best salespeople listen to their customers intently to make sure they’ve identified the right product that satisfies the identified need. They’re careful to make sure all questions have been answered and the cost of the solution is worth the investment on the customer’s part.

When they’re sure, they close.

Many times an attempt to close will bring up a concern that isn’t really a concern at all but will help you determine what the real issue might be. Sometimes there are no issues or questions and the customer is sure that the product will solve their product. They may still be hesitant to make a decision or don’t want to part with their money.

If you have listened to the customer well, proposed a product that solves the identified problem at the right price, closing the sales shouldn’t be uncomfortable. It should feel like a natural part of the sales process. You have a responsibility to yourself *and* your customer to close the sale.