



Automotive Selling Skills Course



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WANTED: SERVICE, MAYBE EVEN WITH A SMILE

by
Matt Roush

Service quality is a message that American business is taking to heart, right? Baloney, according to my experience.

Not long ago, I was shopping for presents for two birthdays in the family — a cordless phone for my mom and a small shortwave radio for my brother. I got home from work at 5:30. Dinner was at 6, and so I figured I'd use that half hour to check out prices at half a dozen stores.

I called up a department store. The first try, the phone rang 10 times. No answer. Well, maybe I dialed wrong, so I tried again. This time it rang eight times before an exasperated-sounding operator came on, giving the store's name as if it were a curse. I asked to be transferred to electronics. I got almost 10 minutes of bad music, so I hung up and tried the main number again. I explained to the operator what had happened, but before I could finish, she brusquely said, "One moment, sir" and put me back on hold.

Well, maybe the third time's a charm, I thought after another eight minutes, and called again and explained again to a different operator that I had been on hold for, oh, weeks. She demanded: "Could you tell me what you want?"

Oh, nothing much, I thought. Maybe a little respect as a potential customer, let alone as a human being.

At least this time I got an electronics sales clerk. I explained what I wanted and got put on hold again for another six minutes. Just as I was about to hang up, the clerk came on the line and informed me that "the assistant store manager is trying to answer your question."

What question? All I wanted was a couple of prices on cordless phones, plus a little explanation on features. The sales clerks can't do that? Then I got more hold music.

My dinner growing cold, I hung up and tried another store. Another surly operator put me on hold for five minutes, then explained that "there's only one clerk in that department now, and he's got several customers."

Over dinner, my wife — who's managed retail ranging from shoe stores to a card and gift shop to a women's clothing store — offered her analysis: "Remember you're dealing with part-time sales clerks. If they're on minimum wage, they don't give a (barnyard epithet); if they're on commission, they don't want to help customers over the phone if there are any customers on the floor."

After dinner, I decided the only thing to do was shop in person. Over the next 2½ hours, I visited nine stores in Dearborn Heights, Westland and south Livonia. I paid special attention to the service. and you know what? I spent more than I had to on both items.

At the store that had me on hold for half an hour, the personal service matched the phone service. It had the cheapest prices on good name-brand cordless phones, but the sales clerk could not be torn away from a discussion at the cash register with a couple of friends about store management, no matter how long I stared at her.

Instead I went down the street and paid \$10 more to a sales clerk who worked three sets of customers as expertly as a really good waiter in a busy restaurant. You know what, he sold all three of us.

As for the shortwave radio, I wound up at a specialty store where the salesman actually knew what a shortwave radio was. he intelligently discussed the merits of digital vs analog tuning and tossed in free batteries and a booklet offering frequencies of major national shortwave broadcasts to boot. It wasn't the cheapest, but it sure was the best.

Price is important, but not everything. Retail chains that offer deep markdowns but continue to see mediocre sales ought to pass this column around. All we customers want is a little respect, and maybe even a little initiative on the part of the salesperson. Even if it's a minor purchase this time, it may not be next time — if we're treated right.

What is the point of this story?

CARING SALEPERSONS BRING PROSPECTS BACK

by

John H. Johnson, Jr.

For many years, auto dealers have had a closing ratio of about 20%. A dealer with a closing ratio of 25-30% has always been the envy of the industry.

The sad fact is that 80% of the people who walk through our doors do not choose to do business with us.

So what happens to those eight out of ten people? The answer is easy: They buy somewhere else. Some will buy another make; some will buy a used car; and a small percentage will not qualify for the new-car financing.

But many of the people who purchase a model that we carry will simply choose to do business elsewhere. As dealers, managers and salespeople, we are sweeping many people out the door in favor of those who are ready to deal today. How can we turn the "walkouts" into "be-backs"?

First, let's agree that most of the people who come into the showroom are going to buy a new car. Most of them will buy within a week of their first visit to a dealership, but most of them will not purchase on their first visit regardless of our efforts.

The dealership that will most often get the chance to "beat all other deals" is the dealership whose staff has taken the time to cultivate a relationship when the customer was not prepared to purchase. Making customers comfortable goes a long way toward making them want to come back when it's time to buy.

The successful salesperson of the 1990's will greet each prospect with equal enthusiasm. It is much more important to determine and understand customers' wants and needs than to qualify them financially as we have done in the past.

We must demonstrate our products completely and allow the customers to evaluate how they will meet their needs and wants.

Further, we must show the commitment our dealership has made to serving them after the sale.

We must ignore the possibility that they may not buy today in favor of developing the probability that they will buy from us when they do buy.

From the initial greeting to the close of the sale, we must treat our customers as if we wish to earn their business. Product knowledge and enthusiasm will be characteristics shared by the top automobile salespersons in today's market; the timing of the customer's decision will be secondary.

The dealerships that are getting the larger share of prospects to come back are those that give the customers all the information they need to make an intelligent purchase decision — including accurate pricing. Honest, straightforward answers to all questions produce sales and start a long-term relationship.

Customers who receive accurate information on product and price are more likely to refer other prospects, and more likely to buy again.

If you give customers pricing information even though they are not ready to buy, chances are you will be unique and show that you are the quality choice.

A person who enters a new car showroom expects to get little information about the product and terms of sale without a long battle. They expect to be pressured to make the buying decision now, without complete information.

The average consumers view a car salesperson as someone who is going to separate them from their money and give as little as possible in return. Their defenses are up and, in many cases, their minds are closed.

It's almost impossible for the dealer to overcome those obstacles by providing evasive answers, especially if the dealer wants a long-term relationship.

Most customers realize that the dealership must make a profit to stay in business and provide the service they expect. They also realize that precise answers are impossible in some situations. To put prospects at ease, we must show them that we do care about their needs and that we will give them good value for their dollar.

Dealers, managers and salespeople, put your brooms back in the closet! by taking your time and putting forth some extra effort, you will keep the "today" 20% and get a bigger portion of the "not now" 80%. After all, "not today" doesn't mean "not at all," and when really isn't as important as where.

What is the point of this story?

NOTES:



What is Selling?

Most successful salespeople have realized that selling is not just getting your prospect to buy your vehicle. It has become a conscientious effort to make this prospect a customer for life. The way you perform as a professional salesperson is directly related to whether they will, first of all, allow you to make the sale, and secondly, to return some day to purchase again.

What is your definition of selling?

What does it take to sell a prospect in today's market?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

NOTES:



Professionalism

Though there are many reasons for the tremendous turnover rate we have in our industry, one of main reasons is that salespeople do not strive to do everything possible to succeed. Because of fear, laziness, lack of leadership, or poor training, salespeople simply rely on the luck of the sale instead of on the skill necessary for maximizing their success on each and every customer.

Major objectives of the automobile salesperson:

- To sell cars and make money.
- To build a clientele.
- To represent the company in a professional manner.
- To continue learning your trade.

List all of the qualities of a professional automobile salesperson:

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

List 5 strengths you have as a salesperson:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List 5 weaknesses you have as a salesperson:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

NOTES:



NOTES:



Getting Started

When you're starting any new career, it's very normal for a person to be a little apprehensive about moving forward. After all, you don't know a great deal about the business that you're in, and no matter how old you are, you're always the new kid on the block.

This is the time for you to become pro-active, and take the time to become organized. The more you can initially know about the responsibilities you're about to undertake, the more confidence you'll have in taking that first step towards a wonderful career in automobile sales.

"Be not afraid of growing slowly,
be only of standing still."

Chinese Proverb

Here are some things you can do to get started:

- Talk to customers even if you feel insecure.
- Become more familiar with the entire dealership.
 - Service — Parts — Used Cars
 - Office — Body Shop — Prep Department
- Introduce yourself to the other employees and managers.
- Get everyone to take a demo ride.
- Study your product knowledge.
- Practice your presentation.
- Be friendly.
- Work closely with your managers.
- Use the "Orphan Files."

NOTES:



Greeting

Have you ever encountered sales clerks who were unpleasant or who ignored customers? I know I have. Each time this has happened to me, I've wondered why such individuals were hired into jobs that require courteous treatment of customers. By retaining such personnel, the store will surely lose money. Therefore, greeting the customer correctly should be the single most important point to learn.

A customer not only wants, but deserves to feel special. Just remember, you need customers more than they need you. They are going to determine whether or not you get paid for your time.

During the greeting process, the actual greeting begins before you even approach the customer. It begins the moment you lay eyes on him. How you respond the instant you come in contact with this prospect will determine the outcome of your relationship with him. It's at this time when you and the customer will either form a like or a dislike for one another.

Here are some ways to enhance your greeting:

- Smile and be friendly.
 - give the customer a reason to listen to you.
- Show a lot of enthusiasm.
 - show appreciation for the customer coming into your dealership.
- Build rapport and make friends with the customer.
- Hand out your business card.
 - remember the customer's name.
- Make the customer feel important.
 - they will determine whether you get paid for your efforts.

NOTES:



Qualifying Questions

"Qualifying" - If ever there is a word that constantly gets salespeople into trouble, this is the one. In other words, Qualifying does not mean looking a person over to determine whether or not he can afford to buy one of your vehicles.

On the contrary, qualifying is defined as the interviewing process for gathering all pertinent information to aid in planning a successful sale and simultaneously guiding the prospect into the right vehicle.

A salesperson should use the responses gathered from this qualifying process to create a selling presentation, as compared to a telling presentation. By utilizing this type of questioning, the salesperson can gather all the information necessary to give himself a better than average chance to sell the vehicle. This valuable information will then allow the salesperson to skillfully sell a vehicle instead of just letting the sale happen by luck.

These questions should be planned in advance so that the process doesn't just happen haphazardly. Responses from qualifying questions will then allow the salesperson to Trial-Close throughout the presentation, placing more emphasis on the areas that are important to the customer. And this is the operative phrase - Important To The Customer! Many times a salesperson will simply recite facts about the vehicle that are important to him but not necessarily important to the customer.

Questions to ask regarding the vehicle being sold:

- What will the vehicle be used for?
- What options are you interested in?
- What monthly payments will fit into your budget?
- If your conditions are met, when would you be able to take delivery?
- What's important to you about buying this vehicle?
- What's important to you about the whole buying process?

Questions to ask regarding the trade-in:

- Did you purchase this vehicle new or used?
- What do you like about it?
- What do you dislike about it?
- Did you pay cash or finance?
- Is there any money owing on it?
- How did you purchase the vehicle before this one?

NOTES:



Trial Closes

A **"Trial-Close"** is a form of questioning the salesperson uses in order to get the prospect to commit to the vehicle before the negotiation process begins. With a trial-close, you can:

1. Sell the prospect on a feature that was important to him.
2. Give the prospect a feeling of ownership.
3. Try to increase the number of "yes" responses from the prospect.

The more "yes" answers you can get from the prospect throughout the presentation, the easier it will be to close the prospect during the negotiation process.

Scenario:

During the "Qualifying" part of your presentation, your customer stated that the four most important things he wanted in his next vehicle was:

- a large trunk
- an engine with sufficient power
- a comfortable ride
- power seats

Example of a Trial-Close:

"Mr. Customer, remember when you said that one of the things you wanted in your next vehicle was power seats? **Can you see** how the power seats in our vehicle will provide less stress and more comfort on those long trips?"

Example of a Psychological Tie-Down:

"Now Mr. Customer, **let me ask you a question. In your opinion**, do you feel that this is the type of power seat you're looking for in your next vehicle?"

Steps to performing a successful Trial-Close:

- Ask the customer, "What's **important** to you?" during Qualifying.
- During the presentation, remind the customer what he said.
- Ask the customer the closing question — can only be answered "yes."
- Psychological tie the customer into your vehicle.

☛ Exercise:

In the space provided on the notes page, choose one of the other important issues in the scenario above, and write a successful Trial-Close. **Remember, a successful trial close can only be answered with a "yes."**

NOTES:



Inventory Walk

It's a proven fact that a salesperson will increase his selling capabilities if he knows his inventory well. And knowing the inventory means not only studying the printed files but also walking the lot regularly. There are two types of inventory walks a salesperson should be concerned with: the Fact Finding Walk, which he takes by himself, and the Customer Walk, which he takes with his customer. Both types are very important and should be utilized extensively.

Fact Finding Walk - A salesperson should make time each morning to walk through the entire inventory, both new and used. It allows him to actually see which models, option packages, and colors are in stock to refresh his memory. It's recommended that he take his "Want List" along to compare it against the inventory.

Customer Walk - A salesperson should take an inventory walk with the customer when the customer is not familiar with the vehicles your dealership sells. Usually, if the customer knows what he wants, the salesperson will simply bring that particular vehicle to the customer so as not to confuse him with other vehicles.

Reasons to take an inventory walk:

- New vehicles arrive daily without your knowledge.
- To refresh you memory on current stock, both new and used.
- To compare your stock against your "Want List."
- To see what vehicles were taken in on trade.

NOTES:



Competitive Analysis

A real pro must realize that with the increased number of different makes and models in the world, a customer isn't going to be looking only at your product line. So, it stands to reason that when a customer comes into your dealership, he has looked at, studied, and compared several other makes in order to make a logical decision. It becomes embarrassing when the customer knows more about what's on the market than the salesperson.

IS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO KNOW YOUR COMPETITION?

If salespeople can answer "yes" they're probably on their way to becoming well-rounded salespeople. Knowing the competition can make the difference between winning and losing a sale. It will instill confidence in their presentations and show the customer that they are knowledgeable and professional. By educating the customer properly, salespeople will offer a service that will be appreciated and admired. If salespeople don't take this part of the job seriously, how will they know that their vehicle has more horsepower than the competition?; or that their interior room is greater?; or that their base price is less and still offers more options? The only way they can learn this information is to study as much, if not more than the customer has.

There are four ways to become familiar with your competition:

- Visit other dealerships.
- Study their brochures.
- Attend auto shows.
- Subscribe to automotive magazines.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

Your Vehicle	Competition	Competition
_____	_____	_____
Engine Size: _____	_____	_____
Engine Horsepower: _____	_____	_____
Interior Room: _____	_____	_____
Trunk Size: Bed Size: _____	_____	_____
Wheel Size: _____	_____	_____
Base Price: _____	_____	_____

NOTES:



Product Presentation

Many times a salesperson will conduct the inventory walk acting as if the customer knows everything there is to know about the vehicle he is looking at. The salesperson will just stand there and hardly say anything while the customer looks over the vehicle. This is no way to sell a vehicle! He is supposed to be a salesperson, not a tour guide. His job is to sell the product to the best of his ability, the operative word always being sell. And the way to sell successfully is to have an organizational plan for demonstrating all aspects of the vehicle.

The salesperson should realize these important points:

1. He should always know more about the product than the customer, and he should have a good grasp of his competitors' products.
2. He should be able to identify all models sitting on the lot, and be able to answer technical questions about them.
3. He should make accurate notations about features and options his customer is interested in, so he can emphasize them during the demonstration.

THE SIX STEP WALKAROUND

The Sticker

- Standard Features
- Optional Features
- Base Price
- Suggested Retail Price
- Gas Mileage

The Drivers Side

- Moldings and Mirrors
- Tires and Wheels
- Front Suspension
- Brake System
- Gas Tank (if applicable)

The Hood

- Aerodynamics
- Front Grill
- Lights
- Engine Compartment
- 5 MPH Bumper

The Passenger Side

- Fit and Finish
- Corrosion Warranty
- Rear Suspension
- Gas Tank (if applicable)

The Trunk

- Size
- Ease of Entry
- Rear Defogger
- Spare Tire
- Rear Lights

The Interior

- Interior Features
- Ergonomics
- Leg and Head Room
- Comfort
- Warranties

NOTES:



Features and Benefits

When presenting a vehicle, you should never describe a feature on your vehicle without stating the benefit to the customer. The customer wants to know what that feature will do for him.

On the worksheet below, choose a vehicle model within your dealership and then write a feature and benefit for each buying motive.

FEATURE AND BENEFIT WORKSHEET

Vehicle Model _____

Buying Motive	Feature	Benefit
Safety		
Style		
Performance		
Comfort		
Reliability		
Economy		

NOTES:



Demo Ride

Do you recall when you last tried on a suit or a dress in a clothing store and you weren't quite sure whether or not you liked it? Then suddenly, someone remarked how great you looked in the outfit and you went home with the purchase. All you needed were those reassuring, complimentary words to help you make your decision.

Selecting a vehicle is a major decision for most people. It would only seem logical that the customer would want to test drive the vehicle he is considering buying. However, salespeople seldom offer test drives to prospects who aren't as yet serious buyers. Customers frequently come into your dealership simply to get price information, pick up brochures, or just to look around at the inventory. Because selling is a game of numbers, even these individuals should be offered a demo ride.

Since it is so much easier to emphasize the dynamics of your vehicle while the customer is enjoying the ride, the demo ride should include more than the mere mechanics of operating that vehicle. Through a series of calculated questions, comments and valuable product information, the salesperson can help the customer begin to commit to the vehicle, thus making it easier to close the sale.

Rules for taking a demo ride:

- Don't take a demo ride with anyone suspicious, drunk, or on drugs.
- Make sure you get a copy of the drivers license.
- Make sure there is gas in the vehicle.
- On cold days, warm the vehicle first — especially for used vehicles.
- Salesperson should drive first.
- Use a predetermined route — make sure manager knows the route.
- Let the customer drive after half the route is completed.
- Always be selling! — Use trial-closes.
- Use the Six Step Interior Presentation.
- Get the customer enthused to start negotiating.
- If possible, park the new vehicle next to theirs.

SIX STEP INTERIOR PRESENTATION

- Comfort
- Ride and Handling
- Ergonomics (where everything is situated in relation to the driver)
- Visibility
- Sportiness
- Safety

NOTES:



Negotiations

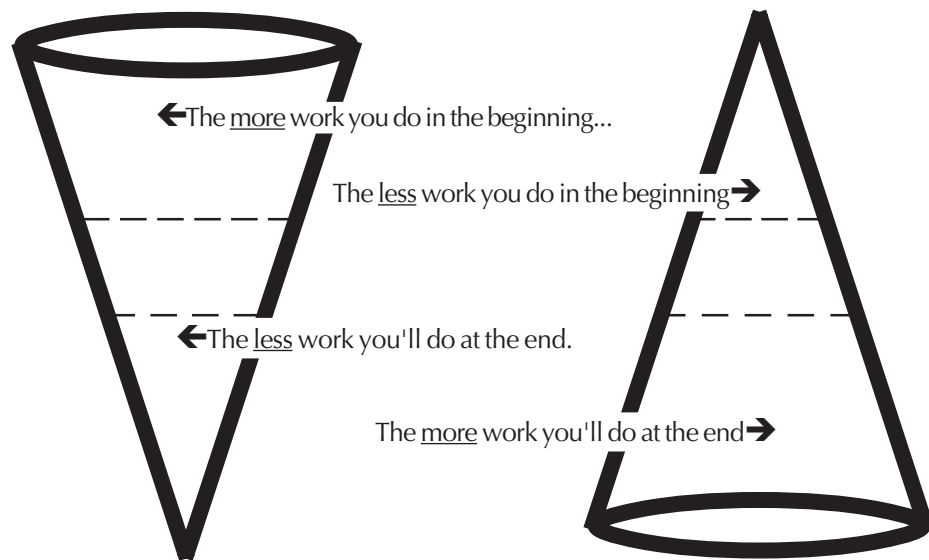
The final outcome of the negotiation process is dependent upon how well the salesperson has performed his duties to this point. If the salesperson doesn't do a good job during the preliminary stages of the demonstration, the negotiation part of the sale will be even harder. He needs to handle these areas properly before talking price and monthly payment:

- Did he greet the customer properly?
- Did he feel he made a friend?
- Did the customer remember his name?
- Did he ask proper qualifying questions?
- Did the customer take a demo ride?
- Did he do any "Trial-Closing?"
- Did he sell himself, the vehicle, and the dealership?
- Does he have a strategy ready for negotiating?

If he's done a poor job on any of these eight points, he might experience a difficult time closing the customer.

The customer knows that his position in the negotiation process is to start low, and the salesperson's is to start high. A salesperson should never be afraid to begin negotiating at sticker price. The very least that can happen is that the customer will accept the high offer. If the salesperson quotes too low a price on the first offer, he might not have any place to go at the end.

THE FUNNEL APPROACH TO SELLING (in order to have an easier time negotiating)



NOTES:



Negotiations

Major steps necessary to work a successful negotiation:

- Explain the negotiation process up front.
- Get all pertinent information on paper.
- Get trade-in appraised.
- Always start high.
- Ask for an offer.
- Take offer to manager.
- T.O. customer to the manager.

NOTES:



Objections and Closes

Handling a customer's objection is one of the most difficult aspects of the sale. There are no magic words that will make an objection disappear. Every customer is different. Every situation for a customer objection is different. So, to try to remember 150 different power closes to handle any objection would be impossible. Most salespeople, when confronted with a stressful situation like an objection, omit trying to logically figure out which close to use. So what is needed is a "process" which the salesperson can practice, and ultimately perfect.

An objection will contain two elements:

- **An Emotional Element**
- **A Rational Element**

The **Emotional Element** is the time when the customer is in an excitable and temperamental state. Before the salesperson can handle the objection, he must first bring the customer into a calmer state of mind. Otherwise, selling the vehicle becomes even more difficult.

The **Rational Element** is the actual handling of the objection. This is the time when the salesperson tries to make sure that the customer's concern is appeased.

To effectively handle an objection, the salesperson must first handle the Emotional Element, before he can tackle the Rational Element.

NOTES:



Handling the Emotional Element of the Objection

Customer Objection - "I Can't Afford It!"

Restate — "I understand how you feel. What you're trying to tell me is that you really don't think you can afford it right now. Is this right?"

Isolate — "Is this your only objection, that you can't afford it right now?"

Verify — "And if it wasn't for this objection, would you at least be considering buying the vehicle?"

Commit — "Now, I don't know if I can do it or not, but if I can somehow show you how you really can afford it, would you at least consider buying the vehicle?"

By **Restating** the objection, you're letting the customer know that you heard what he said, and are restating it to make sure there are no verbal misunderstandings.

By **Isolating** the objection, you're asking the customer if this is the only and true objection. This clarification must occur because many times the customer will not reveal his true objection. It's your job to find out what it is.

By **Verifying** the objection, you're trying to get a commitment to continue on with the process. When the customer voices an objection, he probably feels that he's through with the negotiation process, or that he stalled the process temporarily. Your job at this point is to get the customer to agree that if all details are met to his satisfaction, he will at least consider buying the vehicle today.

By gaining **Commitment**, you're getting the customer to agree that if you can handle his objection, he will consider purchasing the vehicle.

NOTES:



Handling the Rational Element of the Objection

Now that you've handled the Emotional Element of the objection, it's now time to handle the Rational Element. Realize that if you have successfully put the customer at ease, you have built excellent rapport. The customer is at least willing to listen to what you have to say.

Below is a list of possible objections the customer may give you:

- I can't afford it right now.
- The price of the vehicle is too high.
- I need to talk it over with my wife.
- Your not giving me enough for my trade.
- I can get a better deal at ABC Motors.
- I'll need to think it over.
- I need to shop around.
- I'm waiting to save more downpayment.
- My friend bought this same vehicle for \$1000 less.
- I've heard some bad comments about your service department.
- I didn't pay this much for my first house.
- I'm going to wait until my income tax comes in.
- My choice is between your vehicle and a _____ (a different make here).
- Thanks for showing me your vehicle — I'll get back to you.

Choose two of these objections, and write how you would handle them.

NOTES:



Switching to a Used Vehicle

As a salesperson, your main responsibility is to sell vehicles and to make money for yourself and for the dealership. The only way you can accomplish this is to utilize all the avenues available to you. One way is to make use of the Used Vehicle Department. Successfully switching a customer who doesn't qualify for a new vehicle into a used vehicle can result in all of the following:

- A used vehicle will normally net more profit which means a larger commission for you.
- You will accumulate one more sale towards your monthly goal.
- You will add one more satisfied buyer to your totals, which will gain you more referrals.

Since a new vehicle salesperson is mentally programmed to sell new vehicles, it usually never occurs to him to switch a new vehicle prospect into a used vehicle. As you get into the habit of doing this, you'll notice that your sales and profits will increase!!

Three reasons why a person would not qualify for a new vehicle:

- Monthly payment is too high.
- Not enough downpayment.
- Insufficient credit.

Before you let your customer leave without purchasing, ask the following question:

"I don't know if you thought of this, but would you consider looking at an excellent pre-owned vehicle?"

NOTES:



Out of Stock vs Dealer Trades

In general, the simplest and most ideal way to make a sale is to convince your customer to purchase a vehicle directly from stock. But realistically speaking, there will be times when your inventory will not include a car equipped with the exact features the customer is looking for. The vehicles on your lot may not be of the right color, or have the right options, or the right engine.

What do you do then with the customer who has already made his decision, arrives very excited, and is ready to buy? Switching this customer to another vehicle at this time may become a very challenging task. Since you don't want to lose this customer to another dealer, you must employ every available tactic you know to retain him as your customer.

One solution is to special order the vehicle directly from the manufacturer. Another is to suggest searching other dealerships for a possible trade or buy.

Because dealer trades are costly and time consuming for both the dealership and the consumer, it is always best to try to sell from inventory first. Consider dealer trades only when it appears that you will lose your customer to a competitor.

Questions to consider before doing a Dealer Trade:

- Which is more important, the price of the vehicle or the monthly payment?
- How long do you normally keep your vehicle?
- Have you properly sold the extra options to the customer?
- Has the customer considered leasing?
- Can the customer produce more downpayment?

Step-by-step process for doing a Dealer Trade:

- Take out your price book and cost out the vehicle.
- Take a large deposit.
- Inform the customer of his obligation to take delivery of the vehicle.
- Try to find the vehicle utilizing the dealer locator.
- Prepare the paperwork for the transaction.
- Arrange for a driver to pick up the vehicle.
- When the vehicle arrives, check it over personally.

NOTES:



Leasing vs Buying

Ever since the first vehicle rolled off the assembly line, and for many years afterwards, the only way to acquire a vehicle was to purchase it. The customer either paid cash or financed it with a bank. Buying a vehicle was like buying a house. The logic at the time was, while the buyer was paying the vehicle off, it was gaining equity. And at the conclusion of the loan, he still had a vehicle that was worth a good deal of money. And that was the reasoning of the customer in the past. He had equity. But all of a sudden, the equity this buyer had became less and less, and so the banks came up with another finance source - Leasing.

Leasing provides an alternate way for getting the same vehicle with the advantage of a lower monthly payment and a smaller downpayment. It amounts to paying less money for the same car. But when the customer learned that at the end of the finance term he had to return the vehicle to the dealership or pay more money to keep it, leasing became a scary proposition and began to lose its appeal. The reason being that while the customer was paying all this money for the vehicle, he was gaining zero equity.

The salesperson must be able to explain that the customer really does have equity when he leases. The difference is that with leasing, the equity is placed up front and spread over the whole term of the lease giving the customer a lower downpayment and a lower monthly payment.

The benefits of leasing for the salesperson:

- Faster turnaround time.

The benefits of leasing for the customer:

- More vehicle for less monthly payment.
- Can finance for less time.
- Less downpayment.

NOTES:



If You Don't Sell the Vehicle

After you've gone as far as you can with the negotiation process, you might become surprised when your customer is ready to leave, and you still haven't sold him the vehicle. Times like this can be very frustrating and emotionally difficult to handle. You've probably just spent over three hours with this person, given the best demonstration ever, used all the closing techniques you were taught, and you still weren't able to sell the vehicle.

But what you must realize is that the sale isn't over yet. Don't let your customer's lack of commitment to purchase at this time drag you down, and certainly don't take it personally. Just because you didn't close your customer on the first try doesn't mean you've lost the sale entirely. First time closes are becoming less frequent as time goes on.

This is no time to feel discouraged. You still have a lot of work ahead of you. You have hopefully gained the customer's confidence by showing your professionalism, product knowledge and understanding. You have educated your customer and given him the knowledge to make a logical buying decision. You must follow the guidelines outlined in the video to wrap up the sale. Since a customer will usually buy a vehicle within three days, you have a lot of work to do.

Guidelines you should follow if you don't sell the vehicle:

- Let the customer leave with a good feeling.
- Make sure the customer has a business card and brochure.
- Let your manager exit the customer.
- Make a 24 hour follow-up call.
- Send the customer a 24 hour thank you letter.
 - outline the three most important things they liked about your vehicle.

NOTES:



If You Do Sell the Vehicle

CONGRATULATIONS!!! You have reached the start of your stairway to success. And I emphasize the word "start" because this is just the beginning of a hopefully long and lasting relationship with your customer. But don't get too excited yet. You still have a lot of work to do on your job well done.

Once a salesperson closes a deal, his greatest concern is to get the customer out of the dealership before he changes his mind. However, if you've done a proper job thus far, you shouldn't have to worry about this happening.

By taking your time and properly wrapping up the deal, you will save yourself, your customer, and your Sales Manager a lot of headaches.

Steps necessary to properly wrap up the deal:

- Have your customer sign the offer.
- Get all the necessary information
 - driver's license
 - registration
 - proof of insurance
 - home and business phones
- Get a deposit.
- Sell aftermarket products.
 - rustproof packages
 - upgraded stereos, CD players
 - extended service contracts
 - sunroofs
 - alarm systems
 - cellular phones
- Set a delivery time and date.
- Introduce customer to the finance manager.
- Let your manager exit the customer.

NOTES:



Pre-Delivery Procedure

Once you've sold the vehicle, and before the customer can take possession of it, there are several orders of business that must be taken care of. To help ensure a smooth delivery and to help avoid frustration for you and the customer, logically estimate the length of time it will take to perform these jobs before you arrange for a pick-up time. Then go to work! Immediately notify your manager and all personnel of your impending delivery and work cooperatively with them to avoid errors and delays.

Executing pre-delivery procedures properly and efficiently will ensure a smooth delivery and high customer satisfaction, thus increasing your chances for repeat and referral business.

Checklist to make your pre-delivery successful:

- Make sure your paperwork is ready ahead of time.
- Make sure the vehicle is ready.
- Have all of your aftermarket work completed.
- Get insurance verified.

Before delivering the vehicle, make sure this information is correct:

- Customer's name and address.
- Cost figures.
- Vehicle identification number.
- Correct monthly payment.
- Trade-in information.

NOTES:



Paperwork

If salespeople could eliminate all the paperwork involved in selling a vehicle, it would make for some very happy campers. Ask anyone in the business office how frustrating it is typing contracts with the wrong information only to have to re-type them.

Not having the correct information to begin with wastes valuable time for the office staff and money for the dealership. It becomes embarrassing when the salesperson involved has to telephone the customer for information he should have correctly obtained earlier. What's even worse is making your customer return to the dealership to re-sign papers and taking the risk of losing the deal altogether. Suppose you made a mistake on the original paperwork that was in the customer's favor. After you found and corrected the mistake, the customer refused to re-sign the papers.

All of these nightmares make it difficult for everyone concerned and must be avoided. So, if you feel you are at all deficient in this area, do not, I repeat, do not hesitate to ask your Sales Manager for help! He will be glad to accommodate you, especially if it will save him and the dealership future aggravations.

Helpful tips that will make your paperwork ventures tolerable:

- Have the correct information from the start.
- Understand what each piece of information is for.
- Double check all vehicle identification numbers.
- Have a "paperwork checklist."
- Place a ✓ beside all places requiring signatures.
- Arrange documents in the same order.
- Have paperwork typed several hours before customer arrives.

Documents required in a normal delivery:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Application for title | • Lease agreements |
| • Finance contract | • Appraisal slips |
| • Odometer statements | • Deposit slips |
| • Insurance verification forms | • Extended service contracts |
| • Proof of insurance | • Registration certificates |
| • Warranty books | |

NOTES:



Delivery Procedure

The moment of truth has arrived. A proud day in the life of both the salesperson and the customer. If the delivery procedure is successful, the salesperson will earn a handsome commission and the customer will drive away in a shiny new vehicle. He will be the envy of his neighborhood as he slowly drives back and forth past the houses of his favorite friends, while the salesperson takes his commission to the bank and feeds himself for another day. A proud moment indeed!

But, if he's not careful, it could also be his worst nightmare! I've seen deliveries go so badly that the customer actually refused to accept his new vehicle. Because of this, large amounts of time have been wasted by the office staff, service department, finance company, insurance company, and the customer himself. The dealership, Service Manager, Finance Manager, and the salesperson have all lost immediate income. The service, parts and body shops have all lost future business.

This may be an over-dramatization of a real problem. But the fact remains that the delivery should be the most memorable experience a customer should have. The delivery should be exciting, comprehensive, and fulfilling for the customer.

Shortcutting the delivery process is detrimental. Because the salesperson's face is the last face the customer sees, he will be remembered more kindly if the delivery is successful.

Steps to creating a successful delivery:

- Thoroughly go over the vehicle with your customer.
- Take another demo ride.
- Sign all paperwork.
- Collect all money due.
- Review all warranties.
- Do a service walk.
 - location of service, parts and body shop
 - service department hours
 - night "drop box"
 - shuttle service
 - loaner program
 - rental cars
- Let your manager exit the customer.
- Make the delivery memorable.
 - tying a huge bow around the vehicle
 - taking a picture of the customer with their vehicle
 - giving flowers to the ladies
 - filling the vehicle with gas in front of the customer
 - offering a nice gift

NOTES:



Follow-Ups

It's a well known fact that 80% of retail salespeople do not follow-up with their customers. It's also a fact that customers will shop at least four other dealerships before they buy a car or truck. So, if you want your customers to buy from you again, you need to follow this advice.

Regardless of who you wait on, whether it's a customer coming in for a brochure, one you've talked to who's not ready to buy yet, one you had written a deal for but couldn't close, or a telephone prospect, you need to follow-up with this person within 24 hours. It doesn't have to be anything more than thanking him for coming into the dealership, thereby giving you the opportunity to talk to this person and to answer any further questions he may have. At the end of the conversation, you should reaffirm the fact that you would like the chance to earn his business and will do anything reasonably possible to make him a customer.

Following-up after a sale is just as important as the initial follow-up. This is when the foundation is strengthened even further between you and the customer. This follow-up is vital if you want to create your own income by (a) having past customers buy vehicles from you again, and (b) gaining more referral customers.

Occasions for following-up with your customer after the sale:

- To ask for referrals.
- On their birthdays.
- Christmas
- On their anniversary.
- To sell aftermarket products.
- To inform them of a special sale.

Types of letters you can send your customer:

- 24 hour follow-up letter.
- After the sale letter.
- Referral letter.
- Repeat customer letter.
- Newsletter.
- Special offer letter.

NOTES:



Organization

Organization is a word that falls into two main categories within vehicle sales. The first has to do with the way you organize your time away from the dealership, and the second consists of a systematic process of doing business. Both are very important and should be studied, as well as practiced.

Why is it important to be organized? I must admit that I have encountered salespeople who had sloppy business practices, seldom made follow-up calls, and still managed to earn a decent living. But these are isolated cases and exceptions to the rule. The most successful people in any profession are individuals who have good organizational skills.

To be organized means to be systematic, to plan ahead, to use your time at home and at work efficiently and effectively.

Organization gives our lives purpose and direction, and the structure and raw energy needed to succeed. The more organized salespeople become, the more confident, alert and sharp they will remain. Because life has become so fast paced, it's important to have a system to help make your days, weeks, and months flow smoothly.

Lists that will help you become organized:

- Phone-Up list
- Want list
- Things-To-Do list
- Mailout list
- Ups list
- Follow-Up list

Files you should have in your desk:

- Hot file
- Sold file
- Dead file
- Information files

Questions to ask yourself before you leave work:

- What appointments do I have for the next day?
- Which vehicles need to be cleaned for delivery?
- What aftermarket products need to be installed?
- What deliveries do I have?
- Which dealer trades need to be done?
- With which customers do I need to follow-up?

NOTES:



Phone-Ups

The customer who approaches your dealership over the telephone is as important as the one who walks through the door. What a salesperson doesn't realize is that every dealer spends thousands of dollars a year on newspaper, yellow pages, magazine and other promotional advertising. Consequently, he has every right to expect a return on his investments. If a salesperson doesn't handle a phone-up properly, it's as though the advertising money was flushed down the drain.

Here are four suggestions that will help you learn how to take advantage of the telephone customer:

- 1. Treat him like a walk-in customer** — The person calling on the phone is no different than the one who walks through the door.
- 2. Show excitement over the phone** — Since the person on the other end can't see you, the salesperson must show that same enthusiasm as if the customer was in the showroom.
- 3. Obtain as much information as possible** — the salesperson should never hang up with a customer without obtaining the necessary information to follow-up.
- 4. Follow-up within 24 hours** — Since he is considered as a regular customer, follow-up soon and often.

Typical responses a prospect will give you over the phone:

- I want you to give me a price on _____.
- I've seen this car advertised by another dealer for less money.
- Do you have this particular model in stock?
- How much can I get for my trade?
- I don't have time to come in for an appointment.

Choose one of the above statements, and explain how you would handle it.

NOTES:



Phone-Up Presentation

PHONE-UP PRESENTATION

- Mike: Thanks for calling. This is Mike, how can I help you?
- Prospect: I'm calling to see if you have any Ford Tauruses in stock?
- Mike: Are you calling on the Ford Taurus sale?
- Customer: What is the Ford Taurus sale?
- Mike: For the next several days, we're offering great prices on every Ford Taurus in stock. *(At this point you begin to qualify the prospect)* Two door/four door? Manual/automatic? Light or dark color? Have you driven the Taurus before?

You don't have to buy it today do you? Great, let me do this. In order for me to give you the type of service you deserve, let's check not only what we have available for you now, but also what's coming in the next few days as well. It will only take about 15 minutes.

What is your number there? _____
 How do you spell your last name? _____
 And what is your first name? _____

(At this point, you can either call the prospect back, or simply put the prospect on hold. The main idea is that you get the pertinent information you need in order to follow-up and follow-through.)

Could you hold for a moment please? Based on inventories, we have a good availability of Tauruses for you. When would you be more available to set an appointment? Would daytime or evening be more convenient for you? I have 6:48 or 7:39 open. Which of those would fit your schedule better? Do you have a pencil handy? Please write down my name. My first name is _____ and my last name is _____.

Now, is there any reason why you wouldn't be able to keep this appointment?

Would you be writing this appointment down in your appointment book, or would you like me to call you ahead of time to remind you?

If for some reason you shouldn't happen to make this appointment, would you at least give me the courtesy of a call so I can give your time slot to someone else?

Great! Then I'll be looking forward to seeing you at _____.

NOTES:



Prospecting

There are several facets of our industry that a salesperson cannot control. One of these is the number of customers that will come through the door on any given day. Consequently, the number of sales one can generate becomes a guessing game, making it difficult to systematically predict a monthly income. Since his earnings are derived primarily from commissions, he is constantly under pressure to make the maximum amount on each customer, instead of on a volume of customers.

Waiting for customers to stroll into the dealership at their own pace is not the answer. A salesperson has to be able to control his own destiny if he wants to become successful and earn a lot of money. The only way he can do this is to take the bull by the horns and bring some customers into the dealership himself. It's not always easy and it does take a lot of work. But the only way salespeople can protect themselves from having these lulls happen is to prospect on their own.

Although the word prospecting makes most salespeople twinge when they hear it, they twinge even more when they have to do it. But soon they'll learn that all successful salespeople have some method of prospecting that works for them.

Ways your income could become affected:

- Dealership cuts back on advertising.
- Weather becomes abnormal.
- Economy drops.
- You could get sick and miss several weeks.
- Manufacturer doesn't offer any incentives.

Possible prospecting programs:

- Cold calls from the phonebook.
- Service calls.
- Orphan files.
- Referrals from present customers.
- Repeat business.
- Passing out business cards.
- Business and social organizations.
- Visiting businesses.
- Mailout program.
- Newspaper advertising.
- Calling on specific groups.

NOTES:



GLOSSARY

A

Addendum Sticker - An additional sticker placed next to the manufacturer's sticker which explains additional items added to the vehicle by the dealer.

Aftermarket Products - Products sold to the customer that are not part of the option packages, and which usually are purchased from an outside source.

Application For Title - When a vehicle is sold, this application signifies ownership for the customer with the state.

Appointment - A scheduled time set to meet with a prospect/customer.

Appraisal - A set value applied to the customer's vehicle when selling it to the dealership.

Appraisal Slip - Document to complete with customer's vehicle information in order to get an appraised value.

Auto Magazines - Magazines that pertain to the auto industry. *Example: Road and Track, Car and Driver, Automotive News.*

Auto Show - Yearly presentation by manufacturers to display current year vehicles.

B

Base Price - Price of the new vehicle before any options or additional items are applied.

Benefit - Reason why a feature on a vehicle will be good for the customer.

Birddog - A gift given to the person who refers a prospect who ultimately buys your vehicle.

Body Shop - Department where the exterior and non-mechanical components of the vehicle are repaired and painted.

Brochures - Pamphlets in the dealership that describe the vehicle lines and models.

Business Cards - Advertisements to be passed out to prospects that include your name and dealership information.

Buying - The act of purchasing a vehicle through a cash transaction, or through a bank or credit union loan.

Buying Motive - Reason why a customer will purchase a certain type of vehicle. *Example: Safety, Color, Speed, etc.*

C

Closes - The number of times the customer agrees with the salesperson on an idea, option, motive, price, etc.

Closing Ratio - The percentage of deals closed compared to the number of prospects seen.

Commission - Percentage of the profit the salesperson receives as income for selling a vehicle.

Competitive Analysis - Comparing one manufacturer's vehicles with other manufacturers' vehicles.

Cost Figures - What the vehicle is worth when all options and charges are added together.

Credit - Money loaned by a financial institution for the purchase of a vehicle.

Credit Report - Report provided by an independent source that describes a person's credit history and ability to pay creditors on time.

D

Dealer Trade - When one dealership trades a vehicle with another dealership because it doesn't have that particular vehicle in its own stock to sell.

Delivery Procedure - Procedure used to consistently deliver a vehicle in a memorable fashion.

Demo Ride - Ride given to a customer before buying to further sell the vehicle.

Demonstration - Showing all the elements of the vehicle to the customer.

Deposit - Monetary faith offering given by the customer to hold the vehicle until delivery so it won't be sold to someone else.

Difference Figure - During the negotiating process, the single figure that incorporates the price of the vehicle, trade-in and the payoff, if any.

Discount - The amount of money deducted from the sticker price of the vehicle as an incentive for the customer to buy.

Downpayment - Amount of money given to a financial institution to lower the financing amount of the loan.

Driver License - Document enabling an individual to drive.

E

Emotional Element - A physical and emotional change that takes place with the customer, usually during the negotiation process.

Equity - The amount of value the customer has in his vehicle when the appraisal value is more than what the customer owes to the bank.

Ergonomics - Where all the controls are situated in relation to the driver.

Extended Service Contract - An additional service agreement sold to the customer that extends certain parts of the manufacturer's warranty.

F

Fabric Protector - A solvent sprayed on the interior to protect it from staining.

Feature - Any part of the vehicle that can be demonstrated to the customer.

Files

Sold File - File containing information on customers who have purchased a vehicle.

Hot File - File containing prospect names who intend to buy now or in the near future.

Dead File - File containing prospects who cannot be sold now or in the near future.

Finance Contract - Contract that spells out the terms of the buying agreement with the financial institution.

Financing - Money loaned to a customer by a financial institution to purchase a vehicle.

Finance Manager - Individual responsible for matters relating to the purchase or lease of a vehicle

Follow-Up - Any contact the salesperson makes with a prospect or customer after the initial meeting.

Fresh Up - Any prospect who walks through the door that the salesperson waits on for the first time.

G

General Manager - Individual, other than the owner, responsible for the total operation of the dealership.

Greeting - The style used to initially meet a prospective customer.

I

Insurance Verification Form - Form used to determine if the customer has insurance on the vehicle; normally used in a lease transaction.

Inventory Walk - Walk taken with a prospect or by the salesperson alone to review the vehicle inventory.

L

Lease Agreement - Contract drawn between the customer and financial institution when leasing a vehicle.

Leasing - An alternative way of financing whereby the customer uses the vehicle for an allotted period of time and pays a lower monthly payment than if financing the identical vehicle.

Letters

24 Hour Follow-Up Letter - Letter sent after a prospect has left the dealership without purchasing.

After The Sale Letter - Letter sent to a new customer explaining the ground rules for doing business in the future.

Referral Letter - Letter sent to prospects and customers asking for names of individuals who might be interested in purchasing.

Special Offer Letter - Letter sent to a customer offering a special purchase offer at a possible discounted rate. *Example: Rustproofing, Extended Service Contracts, etc.*

Repeat Customer Letter - Letter sent to the customer who has purchased multiple vehicles from the salesperson.

Newsletter - Information letter sent periodically.

Lists

Want List - List used to keep track of vehicles your prospects want and which you currently don't have.

Things-To-Do List - List used to organize your time throughout the day.

Mailout List - List used to keep track of all mail sent to prospects and customers.

Ups List - List used to keep track of all prospects walking into the dealership.

Follow-Up List - List used to keep track of all prospects and customers with whom you need to follow-up.

Loaner Program - Usually a Service Department program whereby a customer has the use of a dealership vehicle while his/her vehicle is being serviced.

M

Maintenance Schedule - Schedule that accompanies each new vehicle explaining when the vehicle should be serviced.

Model - Type of vehicle within a vehicle line.

Monthly Payment - Customer's monthly obligation when financing or leasing a vehicle.

N

Negotiation - Process for determining the sale price for a vehicle between the salesperson and the customer.

Night Drop Box - Service department box which permits the customer to leave keys, vehicle and service order after business hours.

O

Objection - A pause during the negotiation process when the customer has a concern and makes comment to such.

Odometer Statement - Statement the customer signs to verify the mileage on the vehicle being purchased, and/or sold.

Options - Features added to the vehicle that are not a part of the basic model.

Organization - To systematically plan ahead, to use time at home and at work efficiently and effectively.

Out Of Stock - Selling a vehicle from the dealership's inventory as compared to doing a dealer trade.

P

Paperwork - All documents needing to be signed by the customer before delivery of the vehicle.

Paperwork Checklist - Checklist used at delivery to make sure all paperwork is completed and signed correctly.

Partial Payment - Another term used instead of deposit.

Parts Department - Area within the service department where vehicle parts are kept.

Payoff - The amount still owed on a finance contract.

Penalty - The amount charged to a lease agreement when the customer decides to cancel the contract before the term expires.

Phone-Up - A prospect who telephones the sales department for information.

Pre-Delivery Procedure - Systematic approach for examining a vehicle before delivery.

Prep - Servicing a new vehicle when it arrives from the factory.

Price Range - Giving the customer a range of figures, as compared to a specific cost.

Pro-active Approach - Trying to determine in advance how a situation should be handled.

Product Presentation - Demonstration given to a customer on a specific vehicle.

Profit - The amount of money between the invoice price and the actual selling price.

Program Vehicles - Vehicles repurchased from rental car companies for resale.

Proof of Insurance - Certificate issued by the insurance company verifying that the customer has insurance.

Prospect - An individual who may or may not be in the market for a vehicle, but who has not yet purchased or leased from another dealership.

Prospecting - A process for searching for and recruiting new customers.

Cold Calls - Phoning or visiting individuals or companies without notifying them in advance or setting an appointment.

Service Calls - Utilizing the *hard copies* of service records to call customers for possibly trading in their current vehicle.

Orphan Files - Current dealership customers whose original salesperson is no longer employed at the dealership.

Mailout Program - Mailing prospective customers a letter of introduction, then following-up with them within a certain time period.

Q

Qualifying - A series of questions posed to the customer so that the salesperson can gather the necessary information to create a selling presentation as compared to a telling presentation. Information gathering is important in order to create proper trial-closing questions.

R

Rational Element - The part of the negotiation process when the salesperson proceeds to handle the objection voiced. This is done after the Emotional Elements have been handled.

Referrals - Individuals referred by other prospects or customers for the purpose of soliciting business.

Registration - A document which identifies ownership of the vehicle and permits said vehicle to use public accesses.

Rustproofing - Substance applied to bare metal areas of the vehicle to inhibit rusting.

S

Sales Manager - Individual responsible for the sales department.

Selling Presentation - A presentation whereby the salesperson uses trial-closes and other information gathered to sell a vehicle, as compared to merely informing the customer about the vehicle.

Service Advisor - Individual responsible for: (a) recording customer's description of required repairs and services (b) suggesting additional maintenance and services to benefit the vehicle.

Service Department - Area of the dealership where vehicles are maintained and repaired.

Service Walk - Period of time when a customer or prospect is escorted to view the service department and is introduced to the Service Manager and Service Advisors.

Shuttle Service - A service department program whereby a customer is driven to the area of choice while the vehicle is being serviced.

Six Step Walkaround - System for presenting a vehicle whereby the salesperson walks the customer completely around the vehicle explaining every area.

Standard Features - Items on a vehicle that are included in the basic model.

Statistics - Keeping track of numerical stats and data in order to determine how to improve sales performance on a monthly basis. *Example: Sales, Commissions, Ups, Closing Ratio, etc.*

Sticker - Label on a new vehicle that explains vital information.

Suggested Retail Price - Selling amount on the sticker recommended by the manufacturer.

T

Telling Presentation - When a salesperson merely informs the customer about a vehicle instead of trying to sell the vehicle.

Trial-Closes - Having the customer commit or say yes to as many small closing questions before the final negotiation process.

U

Ups - (see Fresh Ups)

Used Vehicle - A previously owned vehicle that was sold or traded to the dealership.

V

Vehicle Identification Number - Number normally located on the dashboard that identifies that specific vehicle.

W

Walk-In Customer - An individual who strolls into the dealership to browse or to purchase.

Warranty - A written guarantee given to the purchaser specifying that the manufacturer will repair or replace defective parts free of charge for a stated period of time.

Warranty Books - Booklets that accompany every new vehicle stating the specific manufacturer's warranty.