

CLOSING YOUR CUSTOMER

From the Greeting Through the Delivery
by Mike Whitty



Closing Your Customer

From the Greeting
Through the Delivery



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Disclaimer

This book is written in the masculine gender for ease of writing. Michael Learning Group or the author have absolutely no bias to age or sex, and believes that any person who applies himself to the study and practice of vehicle sales can and should be successful.

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Introduction to Closing Your Customer

From the Greeting Through the Delivery

“The capability of negotiating... is something that means you not only have to understand fully what you believe and what your interests are but in order to be a really good negotiator, you have to try to figure out what the other person on the other side of the table has in mind.”

— **Madeleine Albright**

“The whole concept of negotiating is intimidating to many people”

— **Leigh Steinberg**

Many salespeople think that the place you begin closing the sale is once you sit at your desk to talk price. If this is where you start to close, you’ve missed out on many opportunities along the way to solidify the sale before you even get to the desk. Not only that, but if you wait until you get to the desk to close, I assure you price will ultimately be the major issue, and you’ll lose money.

It’s surprising to me how few salespeople actually study the concepts of negotiating, closing and handling objections. After all, when you think about it, you don’t get paid for doing a greeting, or a qualifying, or a product presentation, or a demo ride. The only place you actually get paid is when you close the deal, and it’s the least part of the process you’ll concentrate on. Oh, you’ll study product knowledge, but I’ll take a salesperson who knows how to close, who knows very little about the vehicle, over one who knows everything about the vehicle, but cannot close the sale. Now that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t study product knowledge because I’m a big fan of being an expert in your field. But the bottom line is your income is determined by the number of sales you close,

and the amount of gross profit you can keep. That means you also need to be an expert in negotiating, closing and handling objections.

Closing is a skill, it's an art. It's something that should be studied and practiced continuously. A typical salesperson will head to the driving range and hit a hundred golf balls to lower his score on the golf course. He'll spend hundreds of dollars on lessons to perfect the right swing. But for his own financial security, he won't study or practice at all? It just doesn't make sense to me.

Here's a close by a typical, low-producing salesperson, see if this doesn't sound familiar. The salesperson tells the customer, "the price of the vehicle is \$30,000 and that gives you 60 monthly payments of \$375 per month. What do you think?" And the customer says, "that price is too high!" And the salesperson responds with, "well, would you like to make a counter-offer, I'd be glad to take it to my Manager?"

Why does the salesperson respond with this? It's because it's the only thing he knows how to do, give away money. It's like saying, "Mr. Customer, here's my wallet, take whatever money you need in order to make the sale because it's the only way I know how to close!" And that's the way typical salespeople have been doing it for years.

The average income in our industry is around \$40,000 per year. Now this is in an industry where when you got hired, you were told that you would have the opportunity to make unlimited income, sky's the limit. Well, where is all this unlimited income? I can tell you, it's out there. Someone is making it. Your job is to ask yourself, why isn't it me, and how can I make it? Any salesperson in our industry can make more money than they're making right now, but it's going to take more study, more practice, and they'll need to become experts at closing sales.

The difference between a \$40,000 per year salesperson, and one who makes over \$100,000 has got to be more than good looks, an excellent vehicle to sell and a great location. There are definite things you can do to reach a higher income potential, but you need to know what they are, and practice them until you are good. And if you think that the close starts once you hit the desk, think again. You need to learn how to close throughout your entire presentation, from the moment you greet the customer, through the qualifying, into the presentation, during the demo ride, so that once you get to the closing booth, your job is virtually done. It's now just a matter of determining what monthly payment will fit into their

budget, which if you've done your job properly, you'll pretty much already know the answer.

The ABC's of Selling stands for, "Always Be Closing."

Shane Gibson said, "Always Be Closing. That doesn't mean you're always closing the deal, but it does mean that you need to be always closing on the next step in the sales process."

This is the difference between doing a "selling presentation" as compared to merely a "telling presentation." If all you're going to do is a "telling presentation," do everyone a favor. Sit your customer down at your desk, give them a brochure and have them read it. The brochure will give them all the information they need about your vehicle to make a logical buying decision. If that's the case, what do they need you for? They need you to do something the brochure can't do - that is, to persuade, influence and motivate your customer to purchase your vehicle at your price, now! Because what you need to remember is that buying a vehicle isn't just a "logical decision," it's also an "emotional decision." The brochure, as well as it's written, with all the nice color pictures, can't affect their emotions like you can, or should I say, like you should.

Indira Ghandi said, "There are two kinds of people. Those who do the work and those that take the credit. Try to be in the first group. There is less competition there."

If this is true, we can't begin talking about the end of your presentation where you need to negotiate, handle objections and close until we look at closing throughout your entire presentation. So, let's begin with the Greeting.

Closing During the Greeting

“During a negotiation, it would be wise not to take anything personally. If you leave personalities out of it, you will be able to see opportunities more objectively.”

— **Brian Koslow**

“Negotiation in the classic diplomatic sense assumes parties more anxious to agree than to disagree.”

— **Dean Acheson**

You should already know that auto salespeople are not looked at in the highest regard. Chances are, this has nothing to do with you. Our industry has taken a hit over the years by salespeople and dealerships who have used some unscrupulous methods for doing business. Though our industry has also come a long way since the jamming of life, accident and health insurance, signing unfilled documents, and keeping customer rebates, the feelings about auto sales still lingers. It sounds to me that when a customer comes into the dealership, your initial job isn't to sell them a vehicle, your job is to change the way they feel about salespeople in general. If they don't like you right from the start, your chances of selling a vehicle diminish. Or if you do sell the vehicle, it won't be for a lot of commission. Because as customers, we only reward outstanding performance and service.

Have you ever gone into a restaurant and given the server a 25% or 30% tip? Of course you have. Why did you do it? You would have been well within your rights to only give an 18% tip, but chances are you couldn't. Because this server made you feel special and provided you with outstanding service. And if

you tip 25% or 30%, you're not tipping the food because then you'd go back and give it to the cook. So in essence, you're tipping the service. My question to you is, how are you going to get the 25% or 30% tip from your customer? Is it by doing the same old things every other salesperson is doing? Or are you going to have to do things better, more memorable. This tip may be in the form of more commission, or allowing you to sell an aftermarket product, or maybe just making the negotiation process a little easier for you.

This all begins with an upbeat attitude and a big smile.

For some reason, many salespeople don't smile on the greeting, and I can't understand why. Don't take my word for it, just look at other salespeople in your dealership when they greet a customer and see how many of them actually smile. I'll bet it won't be many. And it's a fact that a smile sets the tone for the rest of the relationship. I believe so strongly in this that it's imperative to welcome them into your dealership with open arms. If you had company come over to your house for supper, I'll be you greet them at the door with a smile. And if you were single and going to pick up a first date, I'll bet you'd smile as he/she opened the door. But for your own financial security, you don't smile when this customer is going to determine whether or not you eat tonight? Doesn't make sense, does it?

Along with a smile and a friendly attitude, I also like to give my business card to the customer during the greeting. Some salespeople don't like giving their business card until they're ready to leave. But here's something I realized. As I've gotten older, my memory just isn't as good as it was. During my introduction I'll say, "Hi my name is Mike, what's yours? John, and yours, Mary? I've already forgotten John's name. And I started to think, well if my memory is getting worse, could my customer's memory be the same? And if they can't remember my name, will they feel uncomfortable asking me questions or participating in the presentation? Since friends call friends by their first names, and I'm trying to create this friendship, I not only wear a name tag, but also give them my business card so they will always remember my name. And since I also have trouble remembering names, I'll take out another business card and write their names on the back and keep it in my hand so if I should forget, I can just look down at the card. If you do this, don't forget to x-out the front of the card so you won't mistakenly put it back in your pocket and give it to another customer.

And finally, acknowledge everyone in the party with a greeting and a handshake. I'm sure no matter how young they are they will eventually want to purchase a vehicle. And who would you rather have them purchase it from. So you might as well start prepping them early since you're planning on selling cars at the same dealership for a long time. This whole process is meant to close them on liking you so they'll want to do business with you.

Closing During the Qualifying

“The most difficult thing in any negotiation, almost, is making sure that you strip it of the emotion and deal with the facts.”

— **Howard Baker**

“This is a classic negotiation technique. It’s a gentle, soft indication of your disapproval and a great way to keep negotiating. Count to 10. By then, the other person usually will start talking and may very well make a higher offer.”

— **Bill Coleman**

Now, once you find out what type of vehicle they’re interested in, you should immediately take them over to your desk. Avoid taking them directly to a vehicle on the showroom floor because you’ll be missing an important step in the closing process - the Qualifying, or Questioning process. The term “Qualifying” is often misunderstood. Qualifying is not simply trying to determine whether your customer can afford to purchase your vehicle. In my definition, Qualifying is a series of questions we ask our customer, in order to gather information, so that we can create a “selling presentation” as compared to merely a “telling presentation.” I not only want to determine what color they want, what engine size they need, and what monthly payment they can afford, but I also need to determine what important issues I need to close them on. Unless I can find out that information, all I’ll be doing is a “telling presentation.”

So, once I determine the specifics about their vehicle of interest, I’m going to ask these two questions. The first is, “What’s important to you about the next vehicle you’re going to buy?” I want the customer to respond with something like, “It’s important that I have a large

trunk, it's important that I have a powerful engine, and it's important that I have a lot of back seat leg room." I'm not going to comment on them right now. Instead, I'll stick them in the back of my head because I'm going to use them as "trial-closes" during my presentation. I'll talk more about "trial-closing" in the next segment.

The next question I'll ask is regarding their trade-in. Many salespeople don't concentrate on this area, but the fact is, just as many sales are lost because of the trade-in as compared to pricing.

So I'll ask the customer:

Salesperson: "Mr. Customer, you're going to be trading in your vehicle, is that correct?"

Customer: "Yes!"

Salesperson: "Great! What are some of the things you really like about your current vehicle?"

I want the customer to respond with something like:

Customer: "I like that it has front wheel drive, I like the size of the trunk, and I like the power of the engine."

Salesperson: "And now that you've driven the vehicle for a while, what are some of the things you don't like about the vehicle, or that you would have the manufacturer change?"

I want the customer to respond with something like:

Customer: "I don't like the rear leg room, I don't like the blind spots on the side, and I don't like the gas mileage."

I ask these questions because I need to close the customer on the idea that all of the things he likes about his vehicle, my vehicle has. And all of the things he doesn't like about his vehicle, the manufacturer has made them better. So he can bring all the good feelings about his vehicle over to mine, and leave all those bad feelings behind.

I have several other ideas that may help you during this process. Anytime during your questioning, if your customer tells you that they have bad credit or been through a bankruptcy, immediately stop your presentation and turn him/her over to your Finance or Special

Finance Manager. From this point, you are not selling a vehicle, you are selling Financing. It will be the Finance Manager and the Bank that will determine what type of vehicle this individual qualifies for. If you were to proceed at this point and show him a vehicle he wants to purchase, he may feel very disappointed when the Bank says he can only purchase one much cheaper, and you could lose the sale.

I'm also a big fan of common courtesies. You may have the title of Salesperson, and I may have the title of Trainer, but we are nothing more or nothing less than customer servants. Our most important job is to serve our customers. And the better we serve them, the easier it will be to close the sale, not guaranteed, just easier. So, when you see the customer walking toward the dealership, open the door for him. As he approaches your desk, pull out the chair for him. Help him off with his coat. Offer him some refreshments. Have some coloring books, crayons and maybe a couple of gameboys in your desk to occupy the kids time. All of these will make the customer feel comfortable, make you come across as caring and professional, and hopefully help you close the sale.

Another tip I can give you at this point is to determine what commission you want to make before you present the vehicle.

I remember when I first started selling cars. I got into car sales like many salespeople. I needed a job, answered an ad, and got hired by a dealership. The commission on my first sale was \$542 and on my second sale was \$328, and I thought I was in seventh heaven. Then my next sale was a mini, and the one after that, a mini, and another mini, and another mini, and I was getting really frustrated. So I went to the top grosser in the dealership and said, "John, I notice that you make a lot of gross profit on just about every vehicle you sell, and I'm stuck at making nothing but minis. Can you give me some help on how to get out of this mini slump?"

He said, "Mike, there isn't just one thing I do to close more sales at higher grosses. But if I had to give you one right now, before you start presenting the vehicle to the customer, put a commission in your head on how much you want to make on that sale. Then once you start negotiating, whatever you do, don't come down, even if you have to lose the sale." So I tried it and not only got the sale, but also got the commission I wanted.

What this made me do is to determine a money goal instead of just a sales goal. Now follow this philosophy and I think you'll understand what I'm talking about. Salespeople are taught to concentrate primarily on sales, from both the manufacturer and the dealership. It's a

natural way to look at our business since it's driven by sales on both the manufacturer and the dealership side. It starts when your Sales Manager comes up to you at the beginning of the month and asks, "How many sales are you going to make this month." You're trained to think in terms of sales vs money. And salespeople who only think in terms of number of sales will make a sale at any price and any commission. But once you start thinking in terms of commission, now you have to develop your process so you can make as much gross as possible.

Once I set an amount on how much I wanted to make on that vehicle, I wasn't so willing to come down. I did a more enthusiastic, selling presentation, created more trial-closes, got them pumped up on the vehicle, and when it was time to negotiate, I wasn't so willing to come down. I started selling even more and wouldn't stop. The result was I sold the vehicle, made more commission and stopped my mini slump. I became more money-motivated as compared to just sales-motivated.

I saw this same philosophy work in golf. When Tiger Woods was behind going into the final round of a tournament, inevitably a reporter would ask Tiger, "what do you need to shoot to get back into this tournament," and he would say, "I think I'll need to shoot a 65." Why didn't he just say, "Well, I'll need to shoot as low a round as possible and hope the field comes back to me?" It's because by putting a number in his head, he had something to shoot for, and will do whatever he needs to in order to reach that number.

One question you may be asking yourself is how do I know how much to sell the vehicle for in order to make the commission I want? The simple answer is, you'll learn from experience. If you'll pay attention, you'll figure out the equation that for every \$500 in gross profit you'll make "x" amount of commission. I'm sure your Sales Manager will be glad to help you with this since the more gross profit you make, the more money he or she makes.

So, if you want to close more sales and make more commissions, put a number in your head on how much you want to make on that sale, and you'll find yourself persuading, influencing and motivating your customer even more in order to reach your financial goal.

Closing During the Product Presentation

“Let us never negotiate out of fear.
But let us never fear to negotiate.”

— **John F. Kennedy**

“You must never try to make all the
money that’s in a deal. Let the other
fellow make some money too,
because if you have a reputation
for always making all the money,
you won’t have many deals.”

— **J. Paul Getty**

So, you closed the customer during the Greeting by getting them to like and feel comfortable with you. You gathered a lot of information during the Qualifying to help you close the customer throughout the selling process on issues that were important to him, and now it’s time to close the customer during your Product Presentation.

Dale Carnegie said, “When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion.”

There is no better place to stimulate your customer’s emotions than during the Product Presentation. No matter which carline you sell, the chances are you’ll be showing your customer a vehicle that is more beautiful, more technologically advanced, and may even be a better deal than the vehicle your customer is currently driving. This is where you have the opportunity to shine. As an area of the selling process that is so critical to a successful close, you would think that most salespeople would want to practice presenting their product until they are so good, the customer would be at least mentally closed before he even gets

to the desk. Unfortunately, they don't.

As a National Walkaround Champion for Mazda and a large group seminar trainer by trade, I truly understand the value of an outstanding presentation. And the amount of practice I did showed in my results. Typical salespeople will go to the driving range and hit hundreds of balls to lower their score on the golf course, but for their own financial security they won't practice at all? It just doesn't make sense. So my advise is if you want to close more deals, practice your presentation.

Mark Twain said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word, is the difference between lightening and a lightening bug."

To piggy-back on Mr. Twain's quote, I'm also a big fan of scripting your presentation. Why would anyone want to ad-lib their presentations when there's so much at stake? This is the moment in your process where what you say and how you say it can make or break your sale. Your tone of voice, hand gestures, eye contact, the words and phrases you use and the enthusiasm you show all go into getting your customer to buy-in to your vehicle, your dealership, and you as his salesperson.

If you were an athlete, you would have gone through thousands of hours of practice before even becoming a professional. Can a salesperson really consider himself a professional without that same commitment to excellence? Could the difference between a \$40,000 per year salesperson and one that makes over \$100,000 come from practice, attention to deal and a sold work ethic? Or is it just luck? That's a decision you'll have to make. Hopefully, you'll be making the right decision.

So let's get down to the actual presentation and see where closing takes place. First of all, enthusiasm. If you can't get excited about your vehicle, how do you expect your customer to get excited. And if you're customer can't get excited, why should he buy it?

When I was younger, people in this country had a love affair with their vehicles. They'd wash and wax it often, personally changed the oil, gave their cars names, rode up and down the main street with the radio blaring, and I'm sure some of us were even conceived in a car. I just don't know if we have that same type of feeling for our vehicles. What if you could get your customer to fall in love with the vehicle you were showing? It must be an important concept because a major manufacture put out an ad entitled, "Fall in Love All Over Again." You certainly won't be able to elicit that type of feeling without an enthusiastic presentation.

And it definitely won't happen if your presentation involves reading the features right off the sticker. It will involve a well-prepared, enthusiastic feature/benefit presentation.

Customers do not buy features. They buy what that feature will do for them. So you never say, "This vehicle has air conditioning." You say, "This vehicle has air conditioning which will keep you cool even on those hottest days." You don't say, "This vehicle has a powerful engine." Instead you say, "This vehicle has a powerful engine which will get you on and off expressways, and in and out of traffic quickly, which is actually a safety feature." This is where scripting and practice comes in handy. It allows you to become proficient in what you say and how you say it in order to get the most impact and buy-in from your customer.

As you begin your presentation, there's what's called a Six Step Walkaround where you present the six areas of the vehicle with your feature/benefit presentation. The six areas are: Drivers side, Front, Passenger side, Trunk, Interior, and Sticker. Since I'm attempting to write this as a "closing" program more than a "selling skills" program, you can find this information in my selling skills book, *The Complete Guide to Selling New Cars*. But the Walkaround ties into the next technique I want to talk about called "Trial-Closing."

The most important thing you can do to improve your sales closing performance is to master "trial-closing" techniques. So what are trial-closes? They are non-threatening questions that simply confirm that both you and your customer are on track and in sync with each other. They also surface misunderstandings or objections which, had you not paused to use the trial-close, might never be voiced, leaving you wondering a month later why you lost the deal. Trial-closes are to sales what quizzes were to the final exams we all took in high school and college: a necessary, lightweight step on the way to successfully completing the ultimate, intimidating step - the final exam. Likewise, if you do a good job trial-closing throughout the sales presentation, you'll likely do well on the major close.

Trial-closing accomplishes several important things:

- to gather information

An example of this would be, "Would you like the blue one or the red one?" or "Will you be leasing or financing?" This gives them an opportunity to respond to non-threatening questions and starts them participating in the process.

- to get the customer involved in your presentation

An example for this would be, "How do you feel about this new feature?" This question

allows the customer to tell you what they think to see if you're on the right track with your presentation strategy.

- to gain commitment from your customer

An example for this would be, "Is this the type of power you're looking for in your next vehicle?" The more yeses you can get from your customer throughout the presentation, the easier it will be to get a yes at the end. It's like having them practice the word "yes" on non-stress issues so that word doesn't get stuck in their throat when you're asking for the big "yes."

- to see if they understood what you said

When your customer asks you a question and you answer it, you'll finish with a trial-close like, "Did I answer your question to your satisfaction?"

and finally,

- to close the customer on issues that were important to him

This is the big one, the mother of all trial-closes. Remember when you asked your customer during the Qualifying session, "What's important to you about the next vehicle you're going to buy?" And one of the things the customer said was he wanted a large trunk? When you're doing your Six Step Walkaround and you come to the trunk, your presentation will sound something like this:

"Mr. Customer, this trunk has 14 cubic feet of space. It has the deck lid that goes up 90 degrees so you don't hit your head on it. It has the low entry system to allow you to get your groceries in easier. And it has the tire underneath the wheel well to give you more actual space."

This is an excellent feature/benefit presentation, but it's only a "telling" presentation. The way you make it into a "selling" presentation is by using a "trial-close." So, when you complete your feature/benefit presentation, you'll close like this:

"Mr. Customer, remember when you said that one of the things you were looking for in your next vehicle was a large trunk?" And the customer responds "yes!" "Can you see that this trunk is so large it will virtually get all your groceries in, or all your luggage on that next trip?" And if he responds "yes" to that, I have now closed him on an issue that was important to him.

But it doesn't stop there. It's not enough to close the customer on this issue, I now have to tie him into my vehicle. Since many of my customers are going to be be-backs, I have to assume that he's going to shop me. So I now have to use a "psychological tie-down" which sounds like this: "Now Mr. Customer, in your opinion, is this the type of trunk you're looking for in your next vehicle?" If he says "yes" to that, I have not only closed him on an issue that was important to him, I have also psychologically tied him into my vehicle. That's closing!

Salespeople should practice trial-closing until it becomes an instinctive part of the sales process. Since the number one goal of a professional salesperson is to achieve a high closing ratio, effective trial-closing will get you there faster and easier than any other sales technique.

Closing During the Demo Ride

“The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people half way.”

— **Henry Boyle**

“If you come to a negotiation table saying you have the final truth, that you know nothing but the truth and that is final, you will get nothing.”

— **Harri Holkeri**

OK, you’ve done an excellent job providing your customer with a stimulating presentation, using Trial-Closes and getting your customer involved in the process. But before I begin talking about how to close on the Demo Ride, which is obviously the next step in the selling process, I need to mention several things that could stall the process and disrupt your ability to close.

First of all, while you’re doing the Qualifying and are ready to move on to the Product Presentation, your customer may say, “Well, we’ve been to another dealership and have already seen the vehicle.” Under no circumstance should you allow this to stop you from presenting your product. After all, do you want your sale to be determined by some other salesperson’s presentation, if he/she really did a presentation? And honestly, I don’t know whether the customer is telling me the truth. So I need to question this customer on what they know. So I’ll say, “Wonderful! That will make my job a lot easier. But for my own information, based on what that salesperson showed you, what were some of the things you really liked about this vehicle?” By asking this question, it

won't take me long to find out if what they're saying is true. Also, it will give me an idea on parts of the vehicle that were left out so I can stress them in my presentation. But under no circumstance should you let your customer eliminate the presentation of your vehicle from the process. This will not allow you to begin closing, and the rest of your presentation will come down to price.

Secondly, never ask the customer if they'd like to take the vehicle for a ride. Salespeople who ask this question are lazy and would rather skip this part of the process. Getting the vehicle in the customer's hands is crucial to getting your customer even more excited to buy it. So, what you'll say at this point is, "Mr. and Mrs. Customer, why don't you have a seat at my desk for a minute while I bring the vehicle around so we can take it out for a ride." I'm sure I don't need to mention to make sure there's gas in the vehicle. Nothing will affect your close faster than to run out of gas. And of course, you'll be going on the demo ride with them. If you don't, all that momentum you've built, all the excitement you've created will be gone. You won't know what they're talking about or how they feel about the vehicle. And when they come back from the demo ride, the only question you can ask is, "Well, how did you like it?" Because you don't know because you weren't there.

So, let's talk about closing on the Demo Ride. The one thing I hate is when salespeople say, "When I go on a Demo Ride with my customer, I like to just sit there quietly and allow them to experience the vehicle on their own." Does this sound like a closer to you?

Remember when I talked about the Six Step Walkaround during your Product Presentation? You can also do a Six Step Walkaround on the Demo Ride, where you can talk about Performance, Visibility, Ergonomics, Comfort, Reliability and Safety. And again, don't forget your Trial-closes. These would include closes like, "Can you see how the visibility has improved greatly in this vehicle?" And "Is this the type of performance you were looking for in your next vehicle?"

You'll want to remember that the next part of the selling process is the Close. If your customer has bought vehicles before they likely know this. So you'll want to start getting your customer ready by keeping them excited and motivated throughout the ride.

As you're coming back to the dealership, I like to use statements like, "Why don't you park it in the sold row and we'll see how this vehicle will fit in your budget." If they park it in the sold row, this may give you some valuable information on their buying intention. Or, if you know in advance the vehicle they're trading is looking a little shabby, you may want to have

them park the new vehicle next to theirs. It may give them the visual comparison they need to make the decision to buy.

Closing During the Negotiations

“If you are planning on doing business with someone again, don’t be too tough in the negotiations. If you’re going to skin a cat, don’t keep it as a house cat.”

— **Marvin Levin**

“Never forget the power of silence, that massively disconcerting pause which goes on and on and may last induce an opponent to babble and backtrack nervously.”

— **Lance Morrow**

OK, the moment has arrived to see if all your good work will produce the results you’re looking for. But remember that everything you have done to this point is just the prelude to actually closing the deal. So you’ll need even more negotiating knowledge and expertise to maximize your chances for success.

It’s amazing to me how low producing salespeople think that they can make the big bucks without studying and practicing the art of negotiating, closing and handling objections. They sell 8, 10, 12 vehicles a month, and yet they won’t take the time to read a negotiating book, or listen to a closing technique audio, or heaven forbid, attend a seminar that teaches how to handle objections. They still haven’t realized that they don’t get paid for a Greeting. They don’t get paid for a Qualifying or a Product Presentation. And they don’t get paid for doing a Demo Ride. The only thing they get paid for is Closing, and yet it’s the least part of the process they’ll study.

Don’t get me wrong. There are plenty of salespeople who are very happy making an average living. As long as they can pay their bills and have enough

money left over for a movie and pizza, they're happy. But when you're in an industry where salespeople are promised unlimited income, closing sales is where it's at. And it's not the easy sales I'm talking about, the ones that virtually fall into your lap. I'm talking about the ones you create, the ones that weren't there when you started. The ones where the customer stated right from the start they weren't planning on buying today. And because of something you did, or what you said, or how you said it, or the way you impressed the customer, you convinced that customer to buy your vehicle today. That's real selling. That's the selling that takes your income from \$40,000 per year to significantly more.

I want to begin the negotiating process by going back to the Demo Ride. Once the ride is finished and your customer is walking toward the dealership, what do you think is going on in their heads? Do you think they're thinking something positive like, "Boy, I can't wait to start negotiating?" Or, "I'm going to take this vehicle no matter what the price is!" Or, could they be worried about the salesperson taking advantage of them, and trying to put them in the vehicle at a price they can't afford. Could they even be thinking about the first objection they're going to be giving? So you had them really excited on the Demo Ride, and now that motivation is coming down. Then they sit down at your desk and a typical salesperson pulls out something to right on. Well, everyone knows that writing stuff down can cause stress, so their motivation gets even lower. You had them at a high motivation, now they're at a low motivation. Folks, this is where many salespeople begin the negotiation process - when they have the customer at the lowest peak of motivation. Somewhere you need that motivation and excitement back up before you start talking numbers. There's several thing you can do to make this happen.

First of all, don't pull out your worksheet the moment you reach the desk. This is the time you need to slow the process down. You'll want to get your head straight as well as put your customer at ease. Though customers may feel the need to negotiate for a vehicle, I don't think most of them like to. After all, most people buy a vehicle once very two to five years. It's not like they do this every day. But you do! So you should be better at this than they are.

So, what can you do to put your customers at ease and get them re-motivated to start the negotiating process? There are several setups I like to use that have proven to be quite successful. And I call them "setups" because they get my customer ready to be closed. I actually learned this from my doctor. Before I would have a procedure done, the doctor would explain the whole process to me. I guess he felt that knowing what was to happen in advance is more comforting than not knowing.

One process I used I call “**The Summary Close**” or “**The Continuous Yes Close**,” the purpose being to put the customer at ease, and to start getting the customer to say “yes” so that when I ask him to say the big “yes”, he would have psychologically already practiced it and it would come off his tongue a whole lot easier. It sounds something like this:

Salesperson: “Now Mr. Customer, before we see how this vehicle will fit into your budget, let’s review the vehicle you’re interested in purchasing. You’re interested in purchasing the Brand X vehicle, is that correct?”

Customer: “Yes.”

Salesperson: “And you really like the Egg Shell Blue, is that correct?”

Customer: “Yes.”

Salesperson: “And the V6 engine will give you all the power you need, is that correct?”

Customer: “Yes.”

I think you can see where this is going. This presentation not only brings up the positive aspects of the vehicle, but also gets the customer to continuously agree that this is the vehicle he wants.

Another presentation I use is to explain the entire negotiating process to the customer. I started using this when I realized that if I was the fourth dealership this customer has visited, could he have already experienced three different negotiating styles? Maybe one dealership used a Four Square approach. And at another dealership the salesperson closed the whole deal on his own. And at the third dealership, the salesperson used a desk system where the Sales Manager set the prices. And now he’s sitting at my desk, possibly wondering what’s going to take place now. I felt that this situation may put some stress on the negotiations. So I began explaining the whole process right upfront, hopefully to eliminate some of the fear and anticipation that goes with negotiating. It sounds like this:

Salesperson: “Now Mr. Customer, before we see how this vehicle will fit into your budget, let me explain everything that will take place from this point. This first thing I’m going to do is pull out a worksheet to write on. The reason I’m going to write everything down is because I don’t want there to be any verbal misunderstandings between us. Because the one thing I’ve found that will ruin a salesperson/customer relationship faster than anything are verbal misunderstandings. So this is actually a safety feature for you. Then I’m going to get your vehicle appraised. You’ll be glad to know that we have one of the finest vehicle appraisers I have ever seen in my years in this business. He studies the market every single day, and if he decides he wants to buy your vehicle, your going to like the price he gives you. Then I’m

going to take this whole package to my Sales Manager to get you a deal. If you like the deal, great! All you'll need to do is OK it here and we'll get the vehicle ready for delivery, possibly even today. If for any reason throughout this process you're not happy, don't worry about it. My job is to make you happy. And by the time we're done, hopefully you'll be driving out of here in the vehicle of your dreams, and I'll have another customer that I can take care of not only now, but also in the future. And by the way, if you should see me going back and forth between you and my Manager, don't worry about it. Just sit back, relax and enjoy the show. Because you know that I'm doing my very best to get you the finest deal I can. Does that sound agreeable to you?" "Yes." "Great, then let's get started."

Let me take each section of this presentation and explain why I say it. When I say:

"Now Mr. Customer, before we see how this vehicle will fit into your budget,"

The reason I say this is because if this customer is going to be leasing or financing, I always talk in terms of "budget." When you come back with a deal, there will normally be three figures to contend with - the price of the vehicle, the monthly payment and the trade-in value. That's way too many numbers for the customer to have to deal with. I only want the customer to deal with one number, that's the monthly payment. My job as the salesperson is to convince the customer that the monthly payment is the single most important number to be concerned with. After all, the customer isn't paying \$30,000 cash, he's paying \$375.00 per month. He has to write that check every single month, so it needs to be the most important figure. In fact, it's so important to me that I will even say this to the customer:

Salesperson: "Mr. Customer, you're going to be financing this vehicle is that correct?" "Yes." "So obviously, monthly payment has got to be the most important figure for you to make a logical decision, is that correct?" "Yes." "Great. Do me a favor. Why don't you give me permission to go to my Sales Manager and really work on the monthly payment. Because I feel like if I can get the monthly payment to fit into your budget, that will make you very happy. Can I go ahead and do that for you?" "Yes." "Great!"

With this presentation, I'm virtually getting permission from the customer to work only on that monthly payment. So when I come back with the deal, all I have to say is, "Mr. Customer, I've got great news for you. I got you at the monthly payment you were looking for. So all you need to do is OK it right here and I'll get it taken care of for you."

Now the customer may still want to know the other figures, but you need to remember that with great closer's, there's always a Plan A and a Plan B. Plan A is always going for the gusto. It's getting the customer to sign the first offer. If Plan A fails, then you go to Plan B, which is answering the customer's question. But once you answer the question, you need to immediately get back to the close. So you would respond with:

Salesperson: “Mr. Customer, the price of the vehicle is \$30,000, with \$3,000 down that would give you 60 monthly payments of \$375 per month. All you need to do is OK is right here and I’ll get it taken care of for you, possibly even today.”

So the rule is, once you start to close, if the customer gets you off of the close, you answer their concern, but you need to immediately get back to the close. Otherwise, he could conceivably keep asking you a bunch of questions, and your initial efforts at closing gets lost.

Next I said,

“Then I’m going to get your vehicle appraised. You’ll be glad to know that we have one of the finest vehicle appraisers I have ever seen in my years in this business. He studies the market every single day, and if he decides he wants to buy your vehicle, your going to like the price he gives you.”

The reason I say this is because I’ve realized that the trade-in amount can lose a sale just as fast as the price. So I want the customer to feel like our appraiser is an expert and gives great prices. But I also want to put some doubt in his mind that my appraiser might not want to buy his vehicle. And if he needs to trade the vehicle to make the deal, he may be a little more flexible in the price he wants for it. Plus, I’m psychologically telling the customer he’s going to like the price he gives him.

Then I start my close by saying,

“Then I’m going to take this whole package to my Sales Manager to get you a deal. If you like the deal, great! All you’ll need to do is OK it here and we’ll get the vehicle ready for delivery, possibly even today. If for any reason throughout this process you’re not happy, don’t worry about it. My job is to make you happy. And by the time we’re done, hopefully you’ll be driving out of here in the vehicle of your dreams, and I’ll have another customer that I can take care of not only now, but also in the future.”

If you notice, I’m telling the customer if he likes the deal, here’s where you’re going to OK it. So I’m already putting the image into his head to sign the deal. But I’m not saying if you don’t like the deal, I’ll lower the price. What I do say is “If for any reason throughout this process you’re not happy, don’t worry about it. My job is to make you happy.” So I didn’t want to say the opposite of liking the deal is not liking the deal, because I wouldn’t want to give him the idea that he wouldn’t like the deal. So I simply say, “If for any reason you’re not happy, my job is to make you happy.”

And if you noticed, I finish it off with a closing statement like, **“Does that sound agreeable to you?”** so I can gain commitment.

Now, you may have a customer sitting across from you that appears physically nervous about negotiating. For this customer I like to say:

Salesperson: “Ms. Customer, do you even like this part of the process where we need to negotiate on the vehicle?”

Customer: “No.”

Salesperson: “Neither do I. Why don’t we do this. Let’s work together on getting this vehicle for you. So by the time we’re done, you’ll be driving out of here in the vehicle of your dreams, and I’ll have another customer to take care not just for now, but also in the future. Does that sound good to you?”

Customer: “Yes.”

Salesperson: “Great, let’s get started.”

So, we’ve got all this prep work out of the way. I hope you can see how doing a little setup before you begin negotiating will make a difference in the way the customer views you as a caring professional, and makes him relax so you can do your best work.

Let’s talk about the deal. You have it all written down on your worksheet, you have the trade-in appraised and the appraisal slip in hand, and you’re ready to take it to you Sales Manager. I’m going to discuss this as a desk system deal because I feel most dealerships have gone to a desking program where the Sales Manager writes the deal. This actually is my favorite way to do business. It’s been proven time and again that salespeople who use a desk system will make higher commissions than those salespeople who write deals on their own. The job of the Sales Manager is to make sure you’re making a healthy profit, and to recommend ways to handle each customer, at least that’s the way I hope it works in your dealership. What I don’t want to have happen is the Sales Manager giving away too much profit on the first try just to make the deal. So, let me give you a little psychology.

In every Customer/Salesperson transaction, the customer knows that their job is to buy low and your job is to sell high. And by negotiating, hopefully you’ll meet in the middle. But as a professional salesperson who is interested in making a lot of money, you need to be aware that every dollar you give the customer in discount is commission out of your pocket. Most customers do expect a discount. But you want to make them work for it as compared to just giving it all away freely.

Successful negotiators know that the customer will never like the first offer you'll give them. If that's the case, let's give them a higher offer that they won't like. Even if you want to give them an offer of \$100 over invoice, they're not going to like that one since they've been trained that way ever since Dad taught them how to shop for a vehicle. And if you give them such a low offer, you won't have any room to negotiate, and you'll likely lose the sale. You don't want the customer to play the negotiating game better than you. So, start a little higher on your next sale.

If what I've said is true, then why won't most salespeople start a little higher? The basic reason is they're afraid of that first initial reaction the customer will make. They feel if they start too high, the customer will get mad and walk out. Just remember that the customer has been gearing up for this moment and you need to allow them their feelings. It's how you handle they're feelings that will make the difference in whether they allow you to continue the process. But you also must remember that there are many customers who will take your first offer because they don't like to negotiate. So you need to start high with every customer since you'll never know who they are unless you try.

So what do you do with the customer that gets mad and gets up to walk out? First of all, remain seated. Standing up with them gives the impression you're letting them go. And all the customer is doing is trying to show strength. You need to gain the control back. All you need to do while you're still seated is look your customer in their eyes and say, "Mr. Customer, please sit back down. We're not finished yet." If they do, which they likely will, you've gained back the control and you can continue your negotiations. In fact, if the customer sits down, he's virtually giving you permission to continue. That's a good sign.

That was just a little psychology, so let's get back to the deal. Once you complete your worksheet and get the appraisal slip, it's time to take it to your Sales Manager. But before you leave your desk, you may want to consider leaving them with something positive to do to occupy their time while you're away. What I did was to create a testimonial book of positive comments my customer's had given me over the years. Then I would simply say, "While I'm getting you a great deal from my Sales Manager, take a few moments and look through some testimonials my customers have given me over the years, and I'll be right back." This way you're controlling what they're doing while you're away.

Once you're at the Sales Manager's desk, you need to explain everything that has taken place to this point. Do not leave out anything. This will allow the Sales Manager to structure a deal that will be the most beneficial for you to make the sale. If you leave out anything, the

deal could be structured wrong. For example, let's say you told your Manager what type of monthly payment your customer desired, but you left out the fact they he was very sentimental about his trade-in and didn't want to just give it away. So, instead of putting a little more money into the trade-in to show a better value to the customer, he left that out. And when you took the deal back, your customer became so irate that the Sales Manager was trying to steal his trade-in, that you lost the deal.

When I was a Sales Manager, I used to have my salespeople structure the deal in front of me. After all, they've been with the customer for several hours, and I knew absolutely nothing about them. If I approved their deal, they believed in it and were more likely to go back and sell it. In the event your Sales Manager doesn't ask your advice on the numbers, make sure you provide all the information necessary to do the deal properly.

Ok, you're walking back to your desk to give your customer the good news. Please have a smile on your face. You don't want to start out looking like your afraid to give them the news that you're going to start high.

I want to first of all show you how a typical, low-producing salesperson will negotiate. The salesperson will say, "Mr. Customer, the price of the vehicle is \$30,000 and that gives you 60 monthly payments of \$375 per month. What do you think?" And the customer says, "Well that monthly payment is too high." And the salesperson responds with, "Well, would you like to make a counter-offer and I'll take it to my Sales Manager?" Sound familiar? Why does the salesperson even ask "What do you think?" Don't we already know what the customer thinks? He thinks it's too high because we made the payment that way. And since this salesperson doesn't know how to negotiate, the only thing he can do is give away his commission. It's like the salesperson is saying, "Mr. Customer, I don't know a whole lot about negotiating, but here's my wallet, take whatever money you need to make the deal because that's all I know how to do is give away money." So, how should you handle this objection.

You're going to read closing books and articles that try to teach you 150 power closes. They'll even give them names like "the Puppy Dog Close" and "the Ben Franklin Close". I've written articles like this myself. The thing about power closes is that you're not going to use them. But there is one tip that you should use on virtually every objection. Ask "why"!

Typical salespeople handle objections in a "reactive" way. That means, the customer gives them an objection and they react by immediately trying to handle the objection, which usually results in giving money away, or forming an argument with the customer. Before you

respond to any objection, and I'm normally speaking about the 6 main objections you'll usually get, you need to try and gather more information on why they're giving you that objection. You see, customers are trained to give you an objection whether it's a true objection or not. They know that your first offer is not the only offer they'll get, and in order to get you to lower your price, they need to give you an objection of some sort. As a closer, you need to gather more information from the customer to determine why they gave you that objection. This is accomplished by asking the question "why". Here's how it works.

You give the customer a price and they say, "I can't afford it!" At this point, you pause for a moment, maybe lower your eyes, put a puzzled look on your face like you can't understand why they would feel this way, then look them straight in the eyes and say, "Oh really, why don't you think you can't afford it?" By asking this question, you want the customer to justify it to you why they would give you that objection before you respond to it. If the customer says, "Well, I saw it advertised in the paper for this much," great, you can handle that one. Or if the customer pulls out a worksheet from another dealership and says, "Well I was at your competition and they gave me the vehicle for this price," you can handle that one also. If you never asked "why," you may have not found this out.

And it works for all the other objections also. Customer says, "You're not giving me enough for my trade," and you respond with, "Oh really, why don't you feel you're getting enough for your trade?" They may say, "Well I saw it advertised in the paper for this much," which you can then give them a scripted presentation on the difference between wholesale and retail. Or if the customer says, "My friend traded in his car last year and got this much," which is also easy to handle.

By asking "why" after the customer gives you an objection, you can gather information on how to handle it, and make the customer justify to you why they gave you that objection.

So, let's get back to the original deal. I don't think I need to tell you that you never, ever ask the customer, "What do you think?" Instead, I'm going to show you the only way I know how to get a top-dollar deal.

Salesperson: "Mr. Customer, the price of the vehicle is \$30,000 which gives you 60 monthly payments of \$375 per month. All you need to do is Ok it right over here and we'll get it taken care of for you, possibly even today."

When you ask the customer to OK the deal, you simply turn the worksheet toward the customer, lay the pen on top, look the customer straight in their eyes and don't say a word. At this point usually one of five things will happen. He may go for the pen. It's a reflective action that if you put the pen down in front of a person, they will instinctively reach for it. If he reaches for it, you've got a deal. It may not be this deal, but you've got a deal. The customer will put the pen aside, pick up the worksheet and start reading it. If he starts to read it, you've got a deal. It may not be this deal, but you've got a deal. He may start asking you questions about it like, "Does this deal include an extended service contract?" If he asks you questions, you've got a deal. It may not be this deal, but you've got a deal. If he makes you a counter-offer, you've got a deal. Or heaven forbid, he may pick the pen up and sign it. If he signs it, you've got a deal, and it's a big deal, or he's what's called a "get-me-bought," which means he's saying, "I don't care what the deal is, if you can get me bought, I'll take it." These are the five most common reactions that successful negotiators look for.

In my opinion, when we talk about "asking for the sale," it's not like saying "will you buy the vehicle from me?" What I feel it means is "asking the customer to sign the deal." The way I previously explained it is the only way that I have ever found to get the customer to sign the first offer. If it's not done that way, it immediately becomes a back and forth situation that leads to giving away money too soon. Don't get me wrong, you may still have to eventually lower your price. I just don't want you to do it before you give the customer an opportunity to sign the first offer. When your customer does sign the deal, always finish with a Reassuring Statement like, "Congratulations Mr. Customer, looks like you made the right decision." This will help eliminate him changing his mind.

If you're still uncomfortable with asking for your customer to OK the offer, there's one other method I really like that makes the process a lot easier. It's called the "3 Payment Close." When you're at the Sales Manager's desk, ask him/her to give you three monthly payments. Then you can ask your customer to OK the offer like this:

Salesperson: "Mr. Customer, the price of the vehicle is \$30,000. That gives you 36 monthly payments of \$580 per month, 48 monthly payment of \$460 per month, and 60 monthly payments of \$375 per month. Which one of these will fit into your budget better?" Whichever one the customer chooses, you simply reply with a Reassuring Statement like, "Mr. Customer, looks like you made the right decision. All you need to do is OK it right here and I'll get it taken care of for you, possibly today!"

I really like this close because the one payment close sounds too much like “take it or leave it.” Customers don’t like to be told what to do, they like to make choices. So, by giving them 3 monthly payments to choose from, you’re allowing them to make the choice they are more comfortable with.

You will have customers who will give you ridiculous offers. You’ve offered the customer a price of \$30,000 and the customer responds with:

Customer: “I’ll tell you what, you give me this vehicle for \$20,000 and I’ll take it today,”

A poor negotiator will respond to this with:

Salesperson: “\$20,000? Where did you think you get this vehicle for \$20,000? I’ll tell you what. If you can get this vehicle for \$20,000 anywhere else, get me one too.” Or, “There’s not that much profit in this vehicle. My Manager would never OK an offer like this.” Or, a definitive “Can’t do it!”

Either way, because of the way the salesperson handled this situation, the deal is done.

Let’s look at this situation logically. You know you can’t sell the vehicle for \$20,000, the customer also knows he can’t get the vehicle for \$20,000. He’s just playing with you. This is the way I would handle this.

When the customer says:

Customer: “I’ll tell you what, you give me this vehicle for \$20,000 and I’ll take it today,” I’d pause for a second, look down at my worksheet in thought, look up at the customer and say,

Salesperson: “No problem!” Then I’d start writing on the worksheet while I’m reading it out loud, “Customer agrees to purchase this vehicle TODAY for \$20,000.” Then I’d say, “Mr. Customer, if you’ll go ahead and OK it right here, I’ll take it to my Manager.”

I’m sure you’re asking yourself, “Why would I take an offer like this to my Sales Manager? He’ll throw me right out of his office!” And you’re probably right. Hopefully, you and your Manager understand that in this situation, the offered price is not the major issue. It’s the signature. Because the rule is, if he’ll sign one, he’ll sign another one.

So here's how you would handle it with your Sales Manager and your customer. As you enter the Sales Manager's office you'd say:

Salesperson: "We offered the customer the vehicle for \$30,000, and he came back with a ridiculous counter-offer of \$20,000 which I know we can't do. But he did sign the offer, and if he'll sign one he'll sign another one. So let's do this. Let's offer him the vehicle for \$28,900 and I'll take that back to him."

As you approach the desk, you look at your customer, smile, and say:

Salesperson: "I've got some great news for you. We're close. The Sales Manager gave you a price of \$28,900, which is a great deal. All you need to do is OK it right here and we'll get it taken care of for you."

The customer will obviously say:

Customer: "Close, we're not close at all."

That's where you would respond with:

Salesperson: "Well Mr. Customer, from the moment I met you I knew you were a savvy buyer. And with as many vehicles as you've purchased in the past, I thought that you really didn't feel like you could purchase the vehicle for \$20,000. So I thought I'd respect you and come back with a more reasonable offer. It's a good deal so why don't you just OK it right here and I'll get it taken care of for you."

Creating responses like this means that you need to become a fan of scripting. When you consider that the national closing average for salespeople in this country is about 10%, closing at 20% would be pretty good. But when you think about it, that means that 80% of your customers are not buying from you. I know that within this percentage there are things that you can't control - poor credit, upside down trade-ins, lack of a sufficient down payment, etc. But could it also be that you just don't know how to close well enough?

In your dealership, you should know how to handle every objection that comes your way. After all, why wouldn't you? And it's not like you have to know how to handle 100 objections. There are basically only six major objections that you'll get most of the time. They are:

- I can't afford it!
- Your price is too high!
- You're not giving me enough for my trade-in!
- I need to shop around!
- I need to talk it over with my spouse!
- I need to think about it!

Any other objections you may get won't happen that often where you'll need to place major emphasis on them.

Scripting how to handle these objections is vital to your closing success. In fact, why would any salesperson want to handle objections off-the-cuff, ad-libbing them, saying whatever comes out of their mouths at the time? Do you think that salespeople in other industries who make hundreds of thousands of dollars a year ad-lib their presentations? Or do they know exactly what to say and how to say it. What facial expressions to use, their tone of voice, their hand gestures, timing all goes into convincing their customer to purchase their product. Handling an objection successfully isn't something you can just leave to an ad-lib, or heaven forbid, immediately lowering your price because you don't know what else to do.

When times are slow, there's nothing wrong with taking another salespeople into the conference room and scripting out an objection. And then practice it and practice it until you are so good, you virtually want the customer to give you an objection. Because you know that once they do, you have them right where you want them. Can you imagine how much power you would have if you knew how to handle whatever situation would arise with the right words, the right expressions, the right emotions?

I can guarantee you one thing. If you are not currently scripting and practicing how to handle objections, you'll make more sales if you do! You'd have to just by professionalism alone.

Finally, if you can't close the deal on your own, it's imperative that you turn the customer over to your Sales Manager. A fresh face of higher authority can possibly close the deal for you. If your Sales Manager comes to your desk, make sure you stand outside your office and don't say anything. Your Manager will likely have an agenda and you don't want to interrupt.

Closing During the Delivery

“A negotiator should observe everything. You must be part Sherlock Holmes, part Sigmund Freud.”

— **Victor Kiam**

“It’s a well-known proposition that you know who’s going to win a negotiation; it’s he who pauses the longest.”

— **Robert Court**

Congratulations! You’re one step away from closing the deal. You may think the deal is already closed, but the customer can still cancel the deal if something goes wrong. The only way this deal is final is when the customer signs the application for title and the contract, and drives the vehicle away from the dealership. So you still have some work to do to make sure that everything goes smoothly to eliminate Buyers Remorse.

Many dealerships will have the Finance Manager go over the paperwork with the customer and have them sign all the appropriate areas. If that is your responsibility, make sure all the paperwork is on your desk ahead of the customer’s arrival so you can make sure that all the information and figures are correct. You should also check over the vehicle completely to make sure that it’s cleaned properly. There’s nothing worse than showing your customer the vehicle with smudges on the windshield, dirt in the door jambs or lint on that dark blue carpeting. If the detail department did a really poor job, send it back. If it’s just a matter of cleaning the windshield, do it yourself.

When the customer comes into the dealership to take delivery, make sure you have a big smile on your face and say an enthusiastic comment like, “Boy, I’ll bet you can’t wait to see your new vehicle!”

You’ll want to thoroughly go over the vehicle with your customer, making sure they know how to work every item in the vehicle, especially how to set the radio stations, change the clock, and work the GPS system. The frustration that arises with customers who take the vehicle home and don’t feel comfortable working these items will show up in your lack of referrals and repeat customer business. If you need to, don’t hesitate to take another Demo Ride to make sure they totally understand their new vehicle.

Keep in mind that if you don’t spend the time covering these items thoroughly, because you’re worried that if you don’t get your customer out of the dealership quickly, he may change his mind, then you didn’t do a very good job closing the customer during the selling process.

Finally, you need to ask for referrals. If you’re in this business for the long-term, you’re going to want the greatest majority of your sales to come from repeat and referral business. Chances are your customer won’t give you any at this point, but you need to setup the process properly so your customer will feel comfortable giving you referrals in the near future.

A low-producing salesperson, if he/she asks for referrals at all, will usually do it this way. As they’re walking the customer out the door, they’ll ask:

Salesperson: “Mr. Customer, if you know anyone interested in purchasing a new or used vehicle, will you send them my way?”

Does this sound like the type of salesperson that is interested in basing their career on repeat and referral business? I think not. Here is a better approach. While you and your customer are still sitting at your desk, say something like this:

Salesperson: “Mr. Customer, do you feel I did the type of job where you’d feel comfortable referring me to some of your friends and relatives?” And the customer should respond if you did a great job:

Customer: “Yes, you did a great job!”

Salesperson: “Thank you Mr. Customer. I do take a lot of pride in making sure my customers are taken care of. When you’re looking for people to refer to me, keep an eye out for anyone who is interested in a new or used vehicle. Possibly someone whose vehicle was involved in an accident and needs to replace it. Maybe someone who’s expanding their family and could use a second vehicle in the household. Maybe someone who’s kid is going to college and could use a dependable used vehicle. Or someone whose vehicle is getting old and shabby looking. Would you look for these types of customers for me?”

As compared to the low-producing salesperson who thinks he can increase his repeat and referral business with a five second question as he’s walking the customer out the door, this presentation is actually training the customer on what to look for in providing referrals. Of course, you should construct your presentations based on your own personality.

Close

“Place a higher priority on discovering what a win looks like for the other person.”

— **Harvey Robbins**

“He who has learned to disagree without being disagreeable has discovered the most valuable secret of a diplomat.”

— **Robert Estabrook**

I hope these segments have helped you to become a better closer. These are not the only methods that great closer’s use, but if it gets you to begin thinking about the methods and procedures that have been successful for me, both physical and psychological, maybe through thought and research, you can begin to develop your own process on how to close more sales.

Anthony Robbins said, “Success leaves clues.”

Successful people have left clues all over the place on how they became successful. You don’t have to reinvent the wheel. All you need to do is to find out those clues, and then use them. But that’s the problem. It’s not the “knowing” that holds salespeople back, it’s the “using.”

Francis Bacon said, “Knowledge is power.”

I don’t necessarily feel that knowledge is power, because you can know everything about everything, but if you never use it, what good is it. There are thousands of salespeople with knowledge and talent,

who never use it and remain low-producing salespeople.

Negotiation is about knowing what you want, going after it, and respecting the other person in the process. Remember that the whole point of negotiating is compromise. This means that you need to look out for yourself, but also be willing to budge in order to satisfy both parties. As mentioned in some of the quotes above, negotiating is to build professional relationships rather than burning bridges on your way out of the closing booth.

Good luck, close a lot of sales, and have a great career in vehicle sales.