

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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Michael Learning Group

Warren, Michigan

Web Site: www.salestrainingstore.net

Author: Mike Whitty

Editor: Irene McDonald, Ph.D.

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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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.