

Cyber-Training for Automotive Salespeople

Weekly Email Lessons



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Manufactured in the United States of America

Disclaimer

These articles are written in the masculine gender for ease of writing. Michael Learning Group has absolutely no bias to age or sex, and believes that any person who applies himself to the study and practice of automotive sales can and should be successful.

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Week 1

The Auto Salesperson's "Road to Success"



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What is success? Success has been defined as *"the progressive attainment of a worthy goal"*. While this is a good general definition, each one of us has our own specific idea about what success means to us. So, what does success mean to you? For some people it means status, prestige, and respect; for others it means power - the ability to influence and command others. But for most people, their definition of success includes financial independence and security.

What is financial independence? Like success, financial independence means something different to each of us. A better question might be: *"What amount of income would make you feel financially independent?"*

For some salespeople that might be \$25,000 per year, for others it might be \$100,000. The important thing isn't the amount of money itself. What really matters is how will you make enough money for you to feel financially independent.

Understanding how an auto salesperson's

business works is one way to make sure you don't become just another statistic. In order to succeed in auto sales, you have to do what unsuccessful salespeople don't want to do, that is, acquire the knowledge that successful auto salespeople have learned through trial and error.

And you don't even have to go through the costly, painful process of trial and error learning. You can prepare yourself for business success by learning all the activities that go into making your business successful, and by making sure each of them is handled properly.

The other key that determines business success is energy. Energy for business comes from self-motivation. Highly motivated people are successful because their enthusiasm for what they're doing has a positive influence on everyone around them. A high-level of motivation also creates excitement, giving salespeople huge amounts of physical energy, enabling them to accomplish even more.

It's important to have the right attitude

You need to know the business side of auto sales to become successful, but it isn't the only thing you need. The right attitude is equally important - and in my opinion, even more important. Each of us is somewhat different. We each have our own opinions, beliefs, likes, and dislikes. Yet one thing that all successful business people have in common is their attitude. They are highly motivated. They know they can get the job done, and they know they'll succeed. That makes them very positive about themselves and their business.

How you can get the right attitude

The right attitude is the one that winners have. It's the "can-do, never give up" attitude. In order to get the winners attitude, here are some things you need to do:

Expect success

Experts in motivation say that 85 percent of success is based on your attitude, so keep your attitude positive. Look for opportunities in every situation. View setbacks as stepping stones rather than obstacles. Keep working your plan based on realistic goals, and don't become discouraged by setbacks.

- **See yourself as successful**

Form of clear mental picture of yourself attaining your goals. See yourself enjoying the kind of success you want. And try to experience the feeling you'll have when you meet your business and personal goals.

- **Prepare yourself for success**

Stay informed about what's going on in the auto business. Read positive books and magazines. Listen to success oriented tapes at home and in your car. Attend

seminars and workshops to upgrade your education.

- **Associate with positive people**

Spend your time with winners and eliminate the losers in your life.

- **Act like a winner**

Positive thinking and positive thought, to yourself as well as to others, are the ways to stay mentally healthy, just as positive health habits are the ways to stay physically healthy. Get motivated and stay motivated.

Habits are the key to success

Everyone has habits. The difference between someone who succeeds and someone who fails is the kind of habits they have. Bad habits are easy to form, but hard to live with. Good habits are harder to form, but they will ultimately lead to success.

Failures generally find it difficult to sacrifice the immediate pleasure bad habits may offer. That's why they don't accomplish much. Successful people, on the other hand, realize that success depends on them. They're willing to put their long-term goals ahead of short-term pleasures by cultivating the habits that lead to success.

The major difference between winners and losers is inconsistency. Winners are consistently just a little bit better. They keep at it and they keep trying to improve. So strive to become just a little better each day. Keep at it and don't be discouraged by setbacks. The amount of persistence will measure your belief in yourself.

I know you can do it

It all boils down to how motivated you become, and how much business sense you attain. You can measure your motivation by your commitment to your business. If you're committed to making your business successful, and you make the effort to prepare yourself with the necessary business skills, you're bound to succeed - provided you stay with it.

So get yourself ready for business success. Be clear about your goals and get motivated to accomplish them. Learn as much as you can about the auto selling business. And do something every day toward making your dream come true

Week 2

13 Reasons for Asking Questions



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A common technique in selling vehicles is to ask questions of the prospect. Recently, a number of salespeople were asked to give their reasons for posing questions. Here is their list:

1. To Get Information About The Prospect's Needs

Before you can even start the sales process, you need information about the prospect. You need to understand the prospect's requirements, sensitivities, preferences and the steps in their buying process. You also need a great many facts relevant to their purchase, as well as who will be involved in the decision process. The best way to get this information is to ask questions. Most salespeople would say that information-gathering is the main reason to ask questions, but there are 12 more important reasons.

2. To Get Feedback

Before you can sell anything, you really have to connect with the prospect. And there are a variety of signals you can use as sources of feedback on how well you are building rapport. You can read their body

language. Do they move forward toward you? Are their eyes closed? Is there a look of indifference? You can also see the openness of their responses. Do they describe their needs in vivid descriptions, or are they holding back information? In addition, you can use questions to get feedback on how well you are doing in terms of your direction, content and depth. For example, you might ask the prospect:

- “How well does this feature meet your needs?”
- “How do you see yourself utilizing this car?”
- “What other features would you need to satisfy your automotive requirements?”

3. To Express Interest In Them And Show You Care

Since the first salesperson tried to sell the first product, it has become common knowledge that people love to talk about themselves. Given the chance, they may talk forever, or however long it takes you to make the sale. One of the best ways to get people to talk about themselves is to express interest in them and their opinions. And one of the best ways to express interest is to ask open-ended questions, which give prospects permission to share their thoughts and ideas.

Questions you might want to use here include:

- “Tell me a little about your family’s lifestyle.”
- “How does your family plan to use this truck?”
- “What are some of the situations in which you plan to use this car?”

4. To Engage Prospects In The Discussion

While in an ideal situation the prospect is giving you their full attention, in fact there are many things competing all of the time - customers in the showroom, papers on your desk, thoughts in the prospect’s mind about chores left undone and so on. With so much competition, it is possible that your message (and therefore your selling opportunity) will be lost. That’s another reason to punctuate your presentation periodically with one or two questions. As soon as the prospect starts giving you answers to these questions, you have their full attention once again.

5. To Identify Ways The Prospect Is Similar To You

Another well-understood selling principle is that people like to buy from people they feel comfortable with. Prospects seem to develop a greater sense of comfort from people with whom they share similarities. Sometimes those similarities are very obvious: we live in the same community, our children go to the same school, etc. Other times it takes work to find these common elements. Here, too, questions can come in handy as tools permitting people to talk about themselves and their interests. Armed with information about them, you are in a perfect position to identify ways in which you are similar to the prospect, your

company is similar to their company, how close your values system is and how your approach to business is just like theirs, and so on.

6. To Pace Your Presentation

A common sales error is to speed through your presentation of why this prospect should purchase your vehicle. After all, you've delivered this presentation to many people in the past year. So, after a while, it seems like old news to you. However, it may be new and innovative to your prospect (or at least you would like them to think so). One tool you can use to pace your presentation and make sure you don't go too fast or skip important details is to ask questions. For example:

- "How would you see yourself using this car?"
- "Why do you think this warranty is outstanding?"

7. To Prove You're A Person They Can Talk To

When your boat is expensive, or when the prospect considers it to be an important decision, trust becomes an important ingredient in a successful sale. You want your prospect to believe you only have their interest in mind, and you are totally committed to helping them fulfill their needs. In other words, you are the type of person they can feel comfortable talking to about some very personal information or ideas. Part of building trust is in the tone of voice you use. And part of building trust is in your questions. Use questions that express genuine interest in their answers.

8. To Demonstrate Your Expertise

Questions are a way for you to demonstrate your expertise in your field. Many times, salespeople know far more about their product than the buyer, and people like to buy from smart people. By asking detailed questions about the prospect's potential use of your product or service, you can demonstrate how much you know about its use. If you want to demonstrate your expertise, ask highly technical questions.

- "What have you heard about our V8 engine?"
- "How familiar are you with our manufacturers outstanding warranty?"

9. To Let Them Show Their Expertise

While many prospects want you to demonstrate your expertise, they want to know that you appreciate theirs as well. Asking questions gives prospects an opportunity to illustrate their own skills and knowledge. It also gives you more insight into how to sell in this situation. You might want to ask questions like:

- "Where is the first place you'll take your new car?"
- "Can you see other friends of yours using a truck like this one?"

12. To Buy Time

It is common in the selling process to come across a buyer who asks very complex, difficult questions that succeed in challenging the limits of your knowledge. While the prospect deserves an answer, you also need some time to think before you give it. That way you can ensure that you are giving the right information. The best way to buy time for yourself is to first respond to the prospect's question with a question of your own. Samples that work to buy you time include:

- "Can you tell me a little more about why you feel that way?"
- "Oh, why is that?"

13. To Move Towards The Close

As the sale progresses, you are getting all types of buying signals from the prospect. Yet, for some reason, the prospect is hesitant to say yes. As any salesperson can tell you, it's time for the trial-close. You offer the prospect a series of choices that forces them to increase their commitment to buying from you. And as you are doing this, you quietly slip the pen into their hands and close the sale.

- "Shall we go ahead and write it up?"
- "Have all of your concerns been answered?"

Week 3

Multiplying Your Sales Through Networking



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For those of you who are auto sales professionals, often the only thing that separates you from the competition is how well you have mastered the art of meeting and connecting with new people. Here is an example of the seven rules of networking, the five types of people to network with and seven sure-fire tactics that lead to a successful networking game plan.

THE SEVEN RULES OF NETWORKING

1. Smile

A smile is a universal welcome sign. A smile allows the other person to know you're approachable.

2. Look the person in the eye

It's a compliment to look at someone sincerely. It's also a way to connect with someone new in the shortest time possible. We all get an uncomfortable feeling when we're talking with someone who looks over our shoulders or around us.

3. Listen

One of the greatest compliments you can give people you speak with is to let them

know you're listening to everything they say. Let them tell you their stories. You'll probably learn something new from them.

4. Be aware of your body language

First impressions are lasting ones. Monitor your posture and physical movement before meeting someone for the first time. In most cases, you need to loosen up because meeting new people can be a tense experience. Find ways to relax and reduce stress before networking.

5. Avoid being pushy

Be careful of coming on too strong or needy. People's instincts tell them when someone is "too hungry," and alarms go off because we all want to be associated with winners, not losers.

6. Give genuine compliments

When you listen carefully to people, often they will mention an achievement they are proud of. Think for a moment and find a way to acknowledge this.

7. Use business cards wisely

Business cards are more than names. Ask for people's cards and treat them as fine treasures. You might even make a note on these cards to help you remember something distinctive about these people's cards, giving you direction when you follow up.

On the other hand, when giving away *your* card, give it only when the other person asks for it. In addition to your card, you might want to give the other person a promotional item. Find something creative but related to your business to offer with your card.

THE FIVE TYPES OF PEOPLE TO NETWORK WITH

Now that you know these simple networking rules, the next challenge is to improve the way you navigate through the sea of people you could possibly connect with. You can find direction through a contact strategy of identifying different types of potential contacts. And, in my experience, the following types consistently provide potential new business relationships:

1. Satisfied customers

These people will be your best referrals. Customers can become advocates because they already know your work. Ask customers to introduce you to others. Most importantly, remember to follow up with your customers with both personal notes and calls. Remember to thank each person who gives you a referral.

2. Friends

At some point, friends talk frankly about their work life. Make a sincere effort to learn more about your friends' work and be open to helping them. Then, when the time is right, ask them who they might be able to refer to you. Of course, offer them the same help.

3. Neighbors

Make the effort to strike up conversations with people you live near. Often, you'll find out that you have common interests that you never would have discovered otherwise.

4. People with similar interests

There are also many associations to join. While industry-related organizations are great, there might also be a civic group or Chamber of Commerce meeting that can be even more fruitful. While people in the same industry to refer one another from time to time, there may be greater opportunities to pitch your services at a meeting with a broad range of businesses represented.

5. Happy, helpful people

These are new people you connect with in unexpected ways. You might meet people on a plane or train, or waiting in line at the movies. Life has a funny way of connecting us when we least expect it. We just have to be ready for the opportunity.

THE SEVEN PARTS OF SUCCESSFUL NETWORKING

Now that you have the rules and a contact strategy, here are specific tactics that will allow you to put into action what you know and become a top-notch networker:

1. Observe and respond to success around you

This means reading the newspaper with a networking eye and listening to the news with a networking ear. When someone in the news gets your attention, send that person a note with a compliment about what he or she said and mention how you were inspired. Then mention that you would enjoy meeting the person and sharing an idea on how you may be able to fill their automotive needs.

2. Set small goals that lead to big goals

Make networking fit into your work plan and set some goals. Set a goal to make two new contacts this week. Make sure you don't stop until after that goal is accomplished. Then follow up with these people. One of the best ways to follow up is with a short handwritten note.

3. Offer a thousand thanks

Thank-you notes stand out because they show people that you took the time to craft a personal message. These notes should be short and might include appreciation for some-

thing specific that the person said or did, a brief review of anything that will trigger the place you both met, an attention-getting comment or a specific offer given within a specific time.

If you take away only one idea from this article, this note concept should be at the top of your list. Most people won't take the time to write follow-up personal notes. When you do, you'll be unique and remembered.

There's a system called the "power of three" note plan. Every day, write three handwritten notes: one to a prospect, one to a customer and one to a friend, either professional or personal. At the end of the week, spending about 12 minutes a day, you'll make 15 contacts, and at the end of the year, more than 750.

4. Do your homework and be prepared

If you're going to meet a prospective customer, do some advance research. People appreciate your efforts in getting to know them and their profession.

5. Always support and empower others

Helping others is a great way to connect, and I often learn the most from those I've extended a hand to. Even in networking, it's much better to give than to receive.

6. Build solid foundations

Once you've determined the best way to network with a new contact, stick with it. For example, if there are monthly meetings for a particular association you belong to, make sure you attend each one.

7. Perception is reality

Always make a good first impression and keep your subsequent impressions good. Whatever you did to make a good first impression (e.g., sending a note, following up quickly, having a cheerful attitude), make sure these positive attributes are always present. ! "Have all of your concerns been answered?"

To sum it up, develop and nurture your network with your own system. Think back to current clients you got through networking. Now remember the tactics that led you to those customers and contacts. The goal here is to discover what you already do that works and repeat it. If all this sounds like a lot, start with one or two tips and work with them long enough to measure their effectiveness.

Week 4

Profile of the Perfect Salesperson



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Every Sales Manager's dream: **The Perfect Salesperson**. High personal sales production. Eager to come to work on time. Excited about the department reaching its quotas. Tactful, polite, and well-behaved at Christmas parties.

Seldom drinks; never embarrasses anyone. Rarely questions the Sales Manager. Always the most cooperative person on the showroom floor. Excellent rapport with existing clientele. Eager to prospect for new business. Dresses and grooms professionally at all times. Rarely asks for a house deal. A dream, or a potential reality?

How many "Perfect Salespeople work at your dealership today?

For as long as there have been salespeople, there have been "good" ones and "bad" ones. For just as long, Sales Managers have been looking for the perfect salesperson - the person who not only meets sales goals, but who cooperates without being a prima donna. Managers look for the salesperson who will loyally stay with the dealership for years, all of the years being highly

productive in sales and profits.

Based on observations of top-flight salespeople, they possess the following characteristics:

A strong drive to be successful

The top-flight salesperson dislikes periods of inactivity. They always need to be doing something, and the activity is normally in the area of producing future business. They have persistence and tenacity that helps them succeed over the long-run.

High levels of energy

The real pros take care of their health. They exercise regularly, watch their weight, eat properly, and maintain themselves in excellent physical condition. They know their high energy level contributes to their success.

Anticipation of success

They have positive expectations of results. They realize that their attitude and mental outlook have a great deal to do with the results they create.

Sensitivity, combined with assertiveness

Top-flight salespeople have a keen awareness of where the prospect is relative to buying, as well as the assertiveness to guide the prospect towards doing business. They know when to back off, as well as when to move forward. They possess the delicate balance of empathy and ego drive.

Ability to think and act quickly

They're spontaneous in their thoughts and actions. They know their prospects, their vehicles; so they're more relaxed and comfortable than the salesperson who can only perform well if the prospect should just happen to want to buy. Their spontaneity and openness build credibility and trust with prospects.

High self-esteem and independence

Top performers don't need to look to others for emotional support. They can function well if left alone to plan and work their prospects, and follow-up with their clients. They're self-starters. Others admire their self-esteem.

Skills in the art of persuasion

They quite naturally want to persuade prospects and clients to move forward and make buying decisions. They capture attention quickly, arouse interest, listen well to clients wants and needs, and make presentations based on both the logical and emotional wants of their prospects. Their human relations skills enable them to develop positive relationships with everyone.

A need to succeed

Top performers thrive on challenges. Their driving ambition is to “win.” Because they recognize that establishing “win/win” relationships is the key to creating more long-term profitability, they constantly seek ways to solve for clients so both parties actually win.

Focus on goals

Top performers set goals which challenge them to stretch and grow professionally, and they’re persistent in their drive to achieve and surpass their goals. They don’t easily quit. They dress and groom to create a professional image so they can reach their goals faster.

Honesty with themselves

They constantly strive to know themselves totally, and they admit and accept their limitations. Self-evaluation enables them to maximize use of their inherent and learned talents, while not being unrealistic in their expectations of success.

Optimism

They anticipate achievement of their goals, almost to the point of having a “vision.” They avoid negative thoughts, destructive pessimism and cynicism. Positive expectation of success enables them to overcome obstacles along the way toward their goals.

Comfort with the title “Salesperson”

The best salespeople see themselves as true professional salespeople. They don’t hide behind titles like: vehicle consultant, product specialist, etc. The real pros have a strong belief in sales as an honorable profession.

Belief in their product and services

Because persuasive communication requires congruent expression of words, tone of voice, and non-verbal messages; total belief in their product enables these special salespeople to produce at high levels. If there is any doubt or hesitancy in the sales message or any lack of belief in the value being offered, the sales opportunity may be lost.

Week 5

Closing Techniques — Part 1



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CLOSING TECHNIQUES - PART 1

To successfully close more sales, be able to determine your prospect's situation, understand the prospect's attitude toward your presentation, and be prepared to select instantly a closing technique based on your prospect. For example, suppose you profiled the prospect as having a big ego, so you planned to use the compliment closing technique. You find the prospect is eager to buy, but is undecided about the model, so you switch to using your standing-room-only closing technique. By changing to a closing technique that fits the situation, you can speed the sale and keep your customer satisfied.

Successful salespeople adapt a planned presentation to any prospect or situation that may arise. Some salespeople have up to 10 closing techniques, each designed for a specific situation. The following are 20 common closing techniques - 10 today and 10 next week in Part 2.

TEN COMMON CLOSING TECHNIQUES

Alternative-Choice Close

If used correctly, the *Alternative-Choice Close* is an effective closing technique. It provides a choice between items, never between something and nothing. By presenting a choice, you either receive a “yes” decision, or uncover objections, which if successfully met, allow you to come closer to making the sale.

- “Which would be better for you, payments at 96 months or 120 months?”
- “Would you rather have the stripped down or luxury model?”
- “Can you take delivery today, or would tomorrow be better.”

The Assumptive Close

With the *Assumptive Close*, the salesperson assumes the prospect will buy. If you’ve done a great job of selling throughout the presentation, you should assume that the prospect’s only alternative is to buy from you. The best way to accomplish this is to come across as totally positive and enthusiastic. You need to earn your prospects trust to such an extent that you purchase the vehicle for them.

- “Just OK the order here, and we’ll have the car ready for you tomorrow.”
- “Now that you’ve driven the truck, let’s see how it fits into your budget.”
- “Why don’t you park the car in the sold row.”

The Compliment Close

Everyone likes to receive compliments. The *Compliment Close* is especially effective when you talk with a prospect who is a self-styled expert, who has a big ego, or who is in a bad mood. Would-be experts and egotistical prospects value their own opinions. By complimenting them, they will listen and respond favorably to your presentation. The prospect with low self-esteem also will respond favorably to a compliment.

- “I really respect an educated buyer. You make my job a lot easier.”
- “It’s nice to see that you did your homework.”
- “You look like the type of person where time is important, is that right?”

Summary-Of-Benefits Close

During the sales presentation, remember the main features, advantages, and benefits of interest for the prospect and use them successfully during the close. Summarize these benefits in a positive manner so that the prospect agrees with what you say, then ask for the order. The *Summary Close* is possibly the most popular method to ask for the order. This technique is useful when you need a simple, straightforward close rather than a close aimed at a specific prospect’s personality.

- “The car you are interested in purchasing, aside from the standard features, has the V8 engine, the sunroof, and the satellite radio. Along with these items, the vehicle comes with a 100,000 mile warranty, and payments that fit well within your budget. I can have

this car ready for delivery tomorrow, just OK it right here.”

The Continuous-Yes Close

The Continuous-Yes Close is similar to the Summary Close. However, instead of summarizing product benefits, the salesperson develops a series of benefit questions that the prospect must answer. What you want to accomplish is to start getting your prospect accustomed to saying “yes.”

Salesperson: “Now Mr. Jones, you stated that you wanted a car with a V8 engine, is that right?”

Customer: “Yes, that’s right.”

Salesperson: “And you also wanted us to add the sunroof?”

Customer: “Yes.”

Salesperson: “And you were also very impressed with our 100,000 mile warranty, that’s also correct?”

Customer: “Yes.”

The Minor-Points Close

It is sometimes easier for a prospect to concede several minor points about a product than to make a sweeping decision on whether to buy or not to buy. Big decisions are often difficult for some buyers. By having the prospect make decisions on a product minor points, you can subtly lead him into a decision to buy. The *Minor-Points Close* asks the prospect to make a low-risk decision, usually a low-cost element of a single product such as delivery dates, optimal features, color, or payment terms.

- “Would you like the stripped down model or the luxury one?”

- “Would taking delivery today or tomorrow be better for you?”

- “Would you be financing or paying cash?”

The Balance-Sheet Close

The *Balance-Sheet Close* is based on the process that people use when they make a decision. Some trainers refer to it as the Ben Franklin Close. The object is to come up with more reasons to purchase your product, than to not purchase. If the pros outweigh the cons, then the prospect should feel that this is a good thing to do, and the proper decision. If the prospect makes his own list, the *Balance-Sheet Close* is more convincing.

Standing-Room-Only Close

What happens if someone tells you that you cannot have something that you would like to have? You instantly want it even more. When you face an indecisive prospect, or you want your prospect to purchase today, indicate that if they do not act now, they may not be able to buy in the future. Motivate the prospect to act immediately by using the Standing-Room-Only Close. However, it should only be used honestly.

- “I’m not sure if the interest rate will be available next month.”

- “I’ll have to check to see if there are any of these models still around.”

- "This is our most popular model, and the demand is very high."

The Probability Close

When your prospect gives the famous, "I want to think it over" objection, or some variation, try saying, "Mr. Jones, that would be fine. I understand your desire to think it over, but let me ask you this - when I call you back next week, what is the probability, from 1 to 100%, that you and I will be doing business?" Then pause, and don't say another word until the prospect speaks. The prospect's response will be from three possible categories:

- 1. More than 50%, but less than 85% for buying** - If your prospect responds in this range, ask what the remaining percent is against buying.
- 2. Above 85%, but not 100% for buying** - If they're in this range, it's pretty sure they are going to buy. Try to convince them not to wait, and purchase today.
- 3. Less than 50% for buying** - This is a signal that there is little, if any, that you'll close this particular sale. You may have to start reselling.

The Negotiation Close

Every sale is a negotiation. Most sales negotiations focus on two major themes: value and price. Prospects often demand more value and lower prices. In their quest for more value at a lower cost, prospects often resort to unfair tactics and put heavy pressure on the salesperson. The purpose of a good sales *Negotiation Close* is not to haggle over who gets the larger slice of the pie, but to find ways for everyone to have a fair deal. Both the buyer and the seller should win.

- "If we could find a way to get your payment in an area that would be comfortable, and still make my dealer satisfied, would you be happy with this arrangement?"

Since different closing techniques work best for certain situations, salespeople often identify the common objections they encounter and develop specific closing approaches designed to overcome these objections.