

GET THE SALE!



Contrary to popular belief, the secret to successful sales isn't necessarily the "close." While asking for the business is an important step, sales is a process that requires careful strategic planning - as well as a succinct tactical approach.

The actual strategy is the overall plan in developing your business and gaining new customers, while the tactics are the specific steps you take within the overall strategy to walk your prospects through the sales process - to the close.

The "close" should be a natural next step in the sales process, not a question you ask your prospect out of the blue such as "Are you ready to place your order?"

Here are a couple of ideas to consider when walking your customers through the sales process so that closing the business is seamless, and the natural next step.

CONVERSATION TO RESPOND TO

A philosophy I live by in my business is "the purpose of a meeting is to get another meeting." In other words, the purpose of a meeting is not



necessarily to close the business (unless you're in a business where "one-call closes" are common). If your business or dealership is like most, it likely will require more than one meeting, as well as other forms of communication such as phone conversations, e-mail exchanges, and other written correspondence before you actually close the sale.

By ending the first meeting with agreeing to go to the next step with your prospect, you are ensuring that the prospect is willing to move forward through the sales process with you.

Another key factor at the end of the first meeting (after agreeing to the next follow-up step), is to ask your prospects for a commitment that when you do call, they will in fact, respond to you. You want them to confirm that they'll engage in more dialogue to move the sale or situation along. How many times have prospects asked you to follow up, and yet when you do, they don't respond? Maddening, isn't it?

I don't know about you, but if the answer to doing business together is going to be "no," I'd rather know that sooner than later so I don't waste my time with someone who isn't really a prospect anyway.

FOLLOW UP IS A PROCESS

One way to insure that your prospects will respond to you when you follow up is

to give them an "out" if they decide not to do business with you. To do this, and after you've agreed to the next follow-up step, is to say something like, "Can I ask a small favor? When I follow up with you in two weeks, if for some reason you've decided not to proceed, will you please let me know? There's a saying in sales that 'a fast no is better than a slow no' so if you've decided to go another way, that's okay, just let me know so I won't waste any more of our time."

Sounds a little bold, I know, but most prospects will respond positively to this because one, it gives them the out they need if they decide to go with another solution; and two, it shows your prospect that you are a busy professional and you don't want to waste anyone's time. This technique also works well because suddenly you're not a desperate salesperson, but rather a confident consultant who has something of value to offer.

I've found it necessary to practice this technique over the years when coming across prospects that are just too nice to say "no." As much as we hate to hear that, I know you'll agree that if the answer is going to be negative that you'd rather know early on in

the process so you don't waste time with a prospect who is never going to become a customer anyway.

The funny thing is, more often than not when using this technique, based on my personal experience, you will not hear "no" that often and will actually end up closing the sale!

ROI VS. PROFIT CENTER

Next, proving your solution does not just show a return-on-investment, or ROI, but actually creates a profit center for your prospect, is now a very persuasive reason for your prospect to continue to work with you through the sales process to the eventual close of the sale.

For example, if by implementing the solution you provide your customer who invested \$10,000 but actually saved \$15,000 in other operating costs within six months, you can show not just an ROI of six months, but an actual profit (or savings) of \$5,000. (Savings can also be viewed as profit since it ultimately affects the bottom line, which is probably the thing your prospect cares about most.)

Finally, creating a sense of urgency will help move the sale along through the process as well. Creating a sense of urgency requires your solution to be so compelling that it doesn't make sense for your prospect to go another day without it.

A sense of urgency is created by emphasizing the pain your prospects are experiencing by not having



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- your solution and showing that by comparison, your solution will help solve their pain. Now all you have to do is show that the sooner your solution is implemented, the sooner their pain will go away, and the next logical step in the sales process will be the sale. [h](#)

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