

Opening the Mysteries of Closing

Great sales results come from planning & setting the stage for success

Luck, as you have likely heard, happens most often when opportunity meets up with preparedness.

All professions, of which sales may well be the oldest, have many things in common. The most common for all professions is the understanding and use of effective processes. Knowing where you want to get to, and getting there, can be two very different things.

Connecting them requires the professional salesperson to know where and how to start a successful presentation. It is right there, at the beginning, that most problems with closing can be found and fixed.

What are the secrets to a strong opening?

- Think like the buyer by mentally putting yourself in their situation.
- Answer these key buyer questions, in this order:
 1. *Who are you?*
 2. *Why are you there, what are you selling?*
 3. *What's in it for them?*
 4. *Why should they believe or trust you?*
 5. *How long will this take?*
 6. *What decisions do you expect them to make?*
- Confirm that they understand and are willing to move forward with the presentation

By thinking like your buyer, you should be able to anticipate questions and be more prepared in your presentation.

Dealing with the key buyer questions is also an essential part of moving effectively to an opportunity to close. More than that, it is an example of the ABC's of closing -- Always Be Closing. Every sales situation consists of several decision points. Each of these points requires the salesperson and the buyer to come to an agreement before moving on. It may be agreeing on color, price, or referrals, OR it may be agreeing

SALES EFFECTIVENESS



Geoff Davidson

on whether you can ask for the sale. It is this sixth key buyer question at the very beginning that most often derails closing the sale, before it ever gets started!

Our Client Driven program identifies the EIGHT communication skills needed in selling, the FOUR stages of the sales process, and the TWENTY steps within the sales process. By ensuring an understanding of the decision process and the communication skills, we are able to help our clients build an effective set of techniques and behaviours to assist their clients in making the right, informed, buying decision.

This article is focused on the process, as that is the most likely area to create barriers to closing. To truly make the most of the process, our formal training, coaching and facilitation programs begin with defining and developing the skills that are necessary to succeed throughout the process.

REVIEW OF CLOSING

This selling skill occurs throughout the sales process. It is essential to close on each point before you can move on to the next. To try setting the stage for Closing early in

your presentation, consider the difference in how *Expectations* are affected in the following examples.

Example 1:

As a person interested in selling, you will be reading this article in which we will be reviewing some skills, the sales process, and specific sales behaviours that might improve your closing ratio. You are under no obligation to buy any of this, to contact us to sign up for our professional programs, or to go back and use any of these techniques.

WHILE TRUE, none of this helps to set the stage for success. Not for you, and not for sales.org.

Example 2:

In this article we are going to begin to identify selling skills, the sales process, and specific behaviours that can improve your closing ratio. By reading this you have shown us that this is important to you, so we'll be concentrating on quick solutions you can take from the article, use now, and increase your sales success.

We know that our first sale to you is having you commit to using the improved skills and behaviours we present to you here. All that we ask in return for providing this information to you without an obligation is that you practice and use these tips, write to us with your success stories, and tell everyone you know about the value our Client Driven sales program has provided you.

It is only after you've experienced the success that these techniques WILL produce, that you'll want to consider taking our entire program. At time please contact us to review what is involved in enrolling in our programs.

Geoff Davidson is founder and principal of sales.org, an Alberta-based consulting firm specializing in sales, training, and organizational effectiveness.