

How Not To Close the Sale

I recently heard a story about a salesperson trying to close a sale. He tried the old “IQ close.” He said, “This option makes the most sense; in fact, this is the option my *smart* clients chose.” So... I guess they are idiots if they don’t choose that option. No wonder salespeople get a bad rep.

Some salespeople place too much pressure on the customer at this stage. Other salespeople spend too much time trying to find the magic pill for closing. Customers are turned off by gimmicky closing techniques. Customers are turned off by overbearing salespeople who treat the interaction as a win-loss scenario. If they close the sale, they win. If they don’t close the sale, they lose.

Salespeople will also put too much pressure on themselves at this stage. They have a now-or-never approach to closing the sale. Even the term “closing the sale” sounds like a power-trip statement. In this scenario, the focus is on the salesperson, not the customer.

Professional salespeople focus on understanding the customer’s business, needs, and problems. The more time spent understanding the customer, the less effort it takes to move the sale forward. A clear understanding of the customer’s needs earns you the right to ask for their business.

Professional salespeople simplify the process. Closing the sale is not arm-twisting pressure. It’s about moving the sale forward. It’s not about finding a hundred different ways to close every sale, it’s about progressing this sale forward.

In your next sales presentation try this simple two-question approach.

- Ask the customer for their thoughts. For example, “What do you think of the proposal?” or “Are we on the right track?”
- If the customer gives you a buying signal, then ask for the business. For example, “How would you like to proceed?” “How would you like to move forward?” or “Can I have your business?”

It’s not complex, it’s not about pressure, it’s not gimmicky, and it certainly isn’t about IQ; it’s about the customer’s needs. Once you understand the customer’s needs, progress the sale forward by asking them two questions.

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