



# The Leadership Institute

*Lighting the Way*

## CLOSING THE SALE

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### Participant Module



The Leadership Institute

*Lighting the Way*

*“Inspiring Dreams, Realizing Potential”*

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## INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

## ARE YOU READY TO CLOSE?



### 1. WELCOME

### 2. OVERVIEW

You are now ready to close the sale! But how did you get to this point—and are you truly prepared to close?

To successfully bring a customer to a closing state of mind, you (in most cases) must:

*Begin with an opening (after securing a meeting with the customer) that engages the customer, establishes rapport, outlines an agenda and encourages buy-in.*

*Interview the customer and conduct a thorough assessment that focuses on the customer's need. Don't forget or underestimate the importance of listening to your customer—stay focused on them and use your skill to pick up clues that will help you further along in the process.*

*Present a great recommendation utilizing the features and benefits of your product that will fill the customer's need(s). Remember that your recommendation should answer the question WIIFM (What's In It for Me?) in the customer's mind.*

*Uncover and answer ALL objections using the information you've gathered during your conversation(s) with the advertiser.*

So, I'll ask again, are you ready to close?

The answer to this question should be a resounding, "YES!"—but only if you've completed the steps outlined above. Without managing objections and making thorough recommendations that educate the customer about how your product can fill his or her need, the task of closing becomes extremely difficult. If you have, however, done your homework, closing, with some practice and the techniques outlined in this module, becomes easy—instead of the hardest part of the sales process.

## MODULE TOPICS

### THE GOAL OF CLOSING

### ARE YOU READY TO CLOSE THE SALE?



Topics of this module include:

- Where does the close fit into the sales process?
- The goal of closing.
- The close from BOTH the salesperson and customer's point of view.
- When to close and what steps to follow.
- Assessing your close.

### 3. THE GOAL OF CLOSING

Your goal in closing is to reach agreement with the client as to the appropriate next steps.

The next step may be, in many cases, just moving the sale forward.

For example, during your call, you may learn that for final approval, you will have to give a presentation to another person. This makes the goal of the call getting that next appointment.

### 4. IS THE SALES PROCESS READY FOR THE CLOSE?

The foundation for the close is the understanding of the customer's needs and how you *and* your organization can address those needs.

The close should not proceed until the salesperson has a clear understanding of several needs that have been expressed by the customer. (You should have acceptance on more than one benefit and related feature before closing.)

NOTE: If you do a good job of probing and providing features and relevant benefits, you and the client will be ready to move ahead.

## THE CLOSE IN THE MIND OF THE SALESPERSON

## THE CLOSE IN THE MIND OF A CUSTOMER



### 5. THE CLOSE—IN THE MIND OF A SALESPERSON

Many salespeople consider the close the most difficult part of the sales call. Many failed sales calls occur because of a weak or premature effort to get a commitment.

*Why do you think this is?*

#### **Fear of rejection**

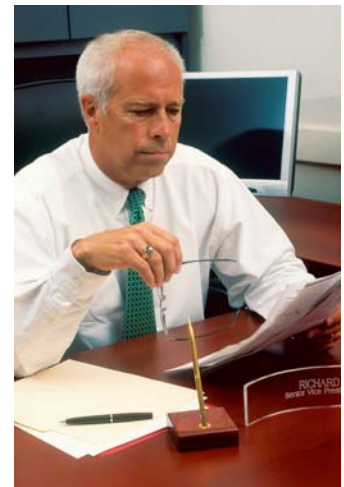
The sales process is often perceived as an adversarial relationship and the salesperson may view the sales process as manipulative.

Remember→ If you are truly providing *VALUE*, you will have little reluctance moving into the close. Remember that what the customer wants above all else is results. We, as highly effective salespeople, must be confident enough in ourselves, our products and services, and most of all, the results we can bring our clients.

### 6. THE CLOSE—IN THE MIND OF A CUSTOMER

Your customer has a need. He or she never would have invested the time in meeting with you, if, on some level, they didn't believe you could help them in some way. If you've conducted the sales call correctly, the advertiser will realize that you are indeed an advertising expert—and will *WANT* you to provide a clear direction and next steps. This includes asking the customer for the sale (closing!).

So, this is *WHY* we close, but *WHEN* do we close?



WHEN DO YOU  
CLOSE?

CLOSING  
SIGNALS



## 7. WHEN DO YOU CLOSE?

Put simply, you close when it is time! When the customer has accepted several key features and benefits that have been presented that helps them to eliminate problems that they have. (What's in it for the customer?)

When the customer signals a readiness to move ahead, such as verbal confirmations:

- *"It sounds good."*
- *"I like what I'm hearing."*
- *"That's great."*
- *"Can I put my logo in my ad?"*

or visual confirmations like smiling and nodding.



As a final step prior to closing, check for any further needs that have not yet been revealed.

- *"Is there anything else I should know about this situation?"*
- *"Do you have any questions about anything we have discussed to this point?"*
- *"Have we covered everything?"*

Note: Listening at this point is not only important, it is critical. As you and the customer are talking, listen and watch for any signs that he or she agrees with your solution. Do not discuss anything else if the customer offers a strong closing signal.

## THE STEPS OF THE CLOSE

### REVIEW FEATURES & BENEFITS

### PROPOSE NEXT STEPS



## 8. THE STEPS OF THE CLOSE

There are 3 steps in the closing process:

1. *Review the features & benefits that were previously accepted by the customer*
2. *Propose the next steps for both you and the client.*
3. *Check for agreement*

### Reviewing the Features & Benefits:

During the course of the call, take written notes of the features and benefits as the customer agrees to them. (Remember to ask permission to take notes.) Also note how the benefit solves the customer's problem and translates into value in the customer's mind; you are looking and listening for the signals that you have answered WIIFM in the customer's mind.

### Propose the Next Steps:

After you review the accepted features and benefits, propose the next steps for both you and the client. It is important for the customer to understand the next steps and the timetable in which the steps need to be executed.

Remember that there are 2 sides to the timetable—your responsibilities and the advertisers' responsibilities. Be certain that the customer not only agrees with what you will do, but that he or she also understands his or her responsibilities as well (for example, providing artwork, etc...)

NOTE: In some cases, the next steps may be to move the sales process forward to another meeting or a presentation to another person.

## 3 TYPES OF CLOSURES

### ASSUMPTIVE CLOSE

### CHOICE CLOSE



## 9. THREE TYPES OF CLOSURES

### The Assumptive Close:

With the “assumptive” close you move ahead with the idea that the customer has already made a commitment. It might sound something like this:

*“I will prepare the ad layout we discussed and have it ready for next week’s paper. How does that sound?”*

or

*“As we discussed, the maximum exposure to your message will come from running your ad on a weekly basis. I will schedule your ad next week for the sports section. How does that sound?”*

### The Choice Close:

With the “choice” close you give the customer an option from two or more options that you provide. It might sound something like this:

*“We could run the ad in the sports section or the general news section. What section do you prefer?”*

or

*“Should we start the campaign with the paint ad or the wallpaper ad?”*

3 TYPES OF  
CLOSES,  
cont'd...

"I NEED YOUR  
OK" CLOSE

THE DREADED  
STALL



## The "I will need your OK" close:

With this simple close you will ask for the customer's commitment through approval.

It might sound something like this:

*"Please take a look at the information on the agreement and OK it at the bottom."*



## The Stall

You've read the closing signals, the customer seems excited and then... you use a closing statement and the customer says, *"Hmm... I need to think about it."*



What do you do? Don't panic—probe and clarify the customer's concerns. Remind the customer how the solution will solve their problems (ie, need.)

## POST-SALE REVIEW

## WHAT DID I DO WELL?

## WHAT CAN I IMPROVE?



## 10. AFTER THE CLOSE:

You've closed the sale, but is your job finished? The answer to that question, is, of course not. You'll need to support the process of building the ad and managing the customer's future needs, but prior to that, you need to review the details of the sales call itself.

A thorough review of the sales call will help you, the salesperson, fine-tune your selling skills.

There are basically two reasons it is valuable for the salesperson to perform an evaluation after each call:

The evaluation helps you assess the hard data of the call — that is, to understand what parts of the process were performed well and what parts need to be improved.

The evaluation will give the salesperson the opportunity to assess the interpersonal data of the call — to see how the salesperson interacted with the customer and what changes may be necessary in the future.

Remember to be as objective as possible when evaluating yourself—and keep it balanced. Most sales calls are not completely bad nor are they perfect.

### POST-SALE REVIEW

### QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



#### Questions to consider when reviewing your call:

What new information did you receive during the sales call?

How will you incorporate this information into action to retain or expand your current commitment?

What is your current level of differentiation? How much of what you proposed to the customer differentiated you from the competition? *Remember- The level of differentiation may be the very reason you continue to do business with the client.*

What is the current level of commitment on the customer's part? Are you reasonably sure that the customer will perform the action items they promised in a reasonable amount of time?

Finally, don't forget some basic questions about your own process:

- Was my presentation clear and logical?
- Did I focus the sales call on the customer's needs and not simply my product?
- Did I have the appropriate sales support materials?

Use this review process as a learning experience.

## SUMMARY

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION



## 11. SUMMARY

### Remember the following when closing:

- The goal of the close is to move the process forward; sometimes it is not to make the sale.
- There are three types of closing techniques: Assumptive, Choice and “I need your ok.”
- You close when it is time; the customer’s acceptance of some of your features and benefits will help signal you to close.
- Conduct a self-audit after the close to assess what went well during the sales process and what needs to be improved.

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

On behalf of The Leadership Institute, thank you for attending this class. We believe that the continued growth of the free paper industry begins with a well-trained, energized sales force.

For more information on TLI’s course offerings, check out the [afcpconference.org](http://afcpconference.org) website.

*"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work and an unrelenting devotion to the things you want to see happen."*  
—**Frank Lloyd Wright**