

Getting The Business / Closing

Traditionally, strategies for closing sales have involved pressuring prospects and clients, neutralizing their stalling tactics, and overcoming their objections -- behaviours that are in direct opposition to the philosophy of the consultative process. On the other hand, salespeople, afraid of harming the relationship they've nurtured by appearing too aggressive, hope the deal will close itself, something, which rarely happens. Consultative closing provides the solution, breaking up the closing process into small, actionable steps that help the salesperson gain gradual buy-in and establish a long-term working relationship with the prospect or client.

If you have successfully performed the earlier steps in the selling process, the close follows naturally. Closing is simply asking for a decision when you believe a prospect is going to say "yes." It has been said that salespeople must "close early and close often." This is not recommended when you are working to build trust relationships with prospects and clients. By following this philosophy you are building an adversarial relationship. A prospect or client is likely to regard asking for the order before he or she is ready to buy as pushy. You don't want to seem pushy, or overly aggressive. If you do, the client is likely to start pushing back.

Research supports the idea of not being too pushy when closing a sale. Successful salespeople tend to let the prospect or client make the decision. This doesn't mean that successful salespeople expect to close only once. Often, undetermined needs still must be addressed. This is one reason that salespeople must be prepared to use various closes with their prospect or client throughout the consultative sales process.

Hot Tips

- Use trial close technique and establish where your customer is at in the sales process
- Apply "respectful assertiveness" to get the sale over the line without upsetting trust and relationship
- Mastering the previous steps can make this final step easier than you may think

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