

Assuming Closing Skills Are the Magic Cure-All

Closing skills were the big thing twenty years ago. We were taught that closing skills were all you needed. If you did not persuade enough people, you had to learn more closing skills. Nowadays, sure, it's nice to have a few closing skills in your persuasion toolbox, but shouldn't you spend more time opening up your audience before you even think about closing a deal with them? In fact, great persuaders don't even have to use closing techniques. That's because their audience is ready to purchase before the end of the conversation has even been reached. You need to be able to connect with your audience, to be sincere and empathic, and to show them you have their best interests in mind. When dealing with a potential client, you should spend more time on connecting, building rapport, and uncovering needs and wants than gunning for a close.

Your audience is tired of those old phrases. You know the ones—tired sales phrases like:

- "The truth is . . ."
- "Trust me on this one."
- "Nobody cares as much as I do."
- "Off the record . . ."
- "I'll treat you right."
- "Call me anytime."
- "Everybody uses it."
- "That looks perfect on you."
- "I'm looking out for you."
- "I'm your friend."
- "I think there is one left."
- "This is a perfect fit."

There is only one way to get anybody to do anything. And that is by making the other person want to do it.

—DALE CARNEGIE

Persuading your audience on a product, service, or idea occurs throughout the entire persuasion process, not just at the end of the encounter. In fact, studies show that how you open your presentation is much more important than how you close it. Research also shows that hard closes not only offend, but that over time, they have also lost their effectiveness. And of those that do work, over half the persuaded audience later have buyer's remorse, with many wanting to return the product they felt pressured to buy.

When closing skills are used at the wrong time, in the wrong place, or with the wrong person, another brick is added to the wall of resistance. When people sense that they are about to be hit with a hard close, the wall starts to increase in thickness and strength.

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