

The Psychology of Closing

So far I've taken you through some of the basics, some of the beginning steps in the closing process. Notice how these steps have all been *outward* expressions of your salesmanship. In reality, the very sophisticated psychology of closing has stood behind every slam-dunk sale. Even the sales transaction that seems so natural, so easy-going and so positive is actually very deliberately driven. Throughout the next several paragraphs, I'm going to share with you what I believe are some of the key components of sound closing psychology. One of the most crucial of these components is conscientious and undeviating attention to getting your prospects to open up and reveal *their* psychology, if you will. What's really going on in their minds? This psychological technique is absolutely fundamental to a successful close. The more you hone your persuasion skills, the more you will discover that your success is directly related to your ability to empathetically and personably respond to the people in front of you. What is one of the most obvious ways to get inside your prospects' minds? It is actually a twofold process: a) Don't talk too much; and b) Ask lots of questions so *they* are the ones doing all the talking.

When we ask lots of questions, particularly if they are open-ended (the most effective type), we experience several positive byproducts. First, our prospects have the opportunity to tell us exactly what their needs are. That is, they can inform us of what they are looking for and why. In sales, using questions to acquire this kind of information is often called "uncovering the hot button." How can you solve your prospects' problems if you don't know what their "hot buttons" are? This is key information if you are to turn your prospects into long-term raving fans.

Second, keeping your own mouth closed avoids the fatal but common error of jabbering away about all of a product's perks and pluses. The truth is, most people only have one or two key reasons for buying, and the more you talk, the more you diffuse the transaction's energy. The more you talk, the more wind you also take out of your sales. Your prospects really just wanted to come get a good deal; they didn't come to hear your discourse on the whole product line. They may listen politely, but as you monopolize the conversation,

spouting off about all kinds of sparkles and pizzazz that have nothing to do with their “hot button,” their minds begin wandering to where they’re going to go next. Then, the sale is lost before you’ve even asked for it. Just remember, talk little, and when you do, keep it simple. Information overload is just going to overwhelm and confuse your prospects, and as the old sales adage goes, “A confused mind says ‘NO’!”

The third reason for asking open-ended questions is that it gives you better control over the conversation and where it’s heading. As soon as your prospects are the ones grilling you, the tables have turned. You lost control. Consider the following question/answer scenarios and you’ll see clearly that the individual *asking* the questions has control, while, perhaps surprisingly, the one doing all the *talking* does not have control: an employer interviewing for a job opening, a doctor preparing to diagnose a patient and an attorney questioning a witness. Note that in each of these examples, the individual asking the questions is in some sort of authoritative and/or advisory role. It is not so different when someone comes to you looking for a particular product or service to fit her/his needs. When you are the “interviewer,” you will glean all the information you need to best guide your prospects while still maintaining control over the course the conversation takes, including, most importantly, the sought-after final conclusion where they’ll enthusiastically buy from you.

The fourth reason for asking open-ended questions of your prospects is that as you let them express their feelings and concerns, it is clearly communicated, albeit in an unspoken manner, that you are sincerely interested in them—always a very important selling technique. Your prospects want to feel that you have their best interest at heart and that you are mindful of their needs. Genuine interest will explode your ability to develop a relationship of trust and solidifying rapport.

The fifth reason for using questions in your selling strategy is that in discussing the issues that are important to your prospects, they are drawn more proactively into the conversation and thus become emotionally involved. Consider the fact that every purchasing action under any circumstance is an attempt to improve or enhance the current

status of a person, place or situation. Why do I consider an emotionally engaged prospect a positive, even necessary, thing? Emotions drive actions; they are the catalysts to closed deals. This is not to say that logic doesn't play a part in the persuasion process as well, because it most certainly does. Emotions, however, provide the initial ignition. They incite action. Meanwhile, logic is the tinder that continues to burn after the initial energy and excitement end. It keeps the commitment intact because there is still something concrete to point to. Some buying personalities will be more logically inclined, but as a general rule, an emotionally engaged individual is much more compelled to purchase. This is not a statement of one's intellectual prowess or lack thereof; it is simply a statement of human nature. In a nutshell, all buying decisions are emotional, while logic rationalizes the purchasing decision.

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