



Book How to Close Every Sale

Joe Girard and Robert L. Shook
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Recommendation

Author Joe Girard provides a view of traditional sales strategies. He presents every step in the sales process and offers advice about every obstacle that you are likely to encounter. While his impressive credentials and experience qualify him to speak and write about successful sales techniques, these strategies, as presented in this book, may backfire when used on today's savvy consumers. Nearly every one of the author's suggestions involves obvious sales one-liners, maneuvers, and psychological tricks that today's marketing-saturated consumer is either immune to or would see right through in an instant. Although written in great detail with plenty of useful examples, this book serves best as an adjunct to other reading material on the subject. *BooksInShort* recommends this book to anyone who has to sell a product or service and wants basic information.

Take-Aways

- Closing a sale is the most crucial part of any presentation.
- Remember that first, and foremost, you are selling yourself.
- The ability to sell yourself comes from positive thinking, confidence, and sincerity.
- Assume you will make the sale.
- Make your customers participate by having them imagine life with their purchase.
- Don't look for too many clues in your customers' body language.
- Don't assume that customers' objections mean no sale, just overturn obstacles by meeting customers' needs.
- Appeal to customers' egos.
- Show customers you are there to help them.
- Don't allow interruptions during a presentation. Take no phone calls.

Summary

Selling Yourself

Closing a sale is the most crucial part of any sales presentation, but the word "close" is a bit inaccurate, since closing a sale doesn't just happen at the end of your presentation. Closing a sale is more complex than it seems. In fact, elements of it are actually included in every stage of your presentation. First, you must create the need for your product or service and a desire to own it. A good salesperson can sell anything. Sales techniques apply to whatever you are selling, and it all begins with the ability to sell yourself. You are key to a successful sale because people are buying your ability to present what you have to offer. Therefore, in a very real sense, they are also buying you.

“You must create a need for your product and you must create a desire to own it.”

Since most people don't like "being sold," you will first have to overcome sales resistance that has been built over time by the stereotyped poor image of salespeople. This includes the idea that haggling and confrontation are involved, and people's inherent discomfort about saying no.

Remember, in addition to selling yourself, you must also sell your product or service, and your company's reputation. You must be a customer, too. If you are selling cosmetics, you should wear them as appropriate. If you are selling Volkswagens, but driving a Mercedes, you are not showing confidence in your product. The keys to selling yourself are:

- Positive thinking
- The ability to visualize yourself making the sale
- A positive self-image
- Being prepared
- Looking successful, but not overdone
- Making the customer feel important
- Selling on your own turf
- Having a sense of humor
- Providing gifts or samples when appropriate
- Sincerity

Assuming the Sale

No matter what you are selling, people come to you because they are interested in what you have to offer. You can also assume that if they are initially resistant to buying, it is because they are gathering information from your presentation before making a commitment. During every presentation, you must assume you will make the sale. Make comments during the presentation that bolster this attitude:

- "I'll send the invoice directly to your attention at your office."
- "Okay this order form right here."
- "You should receive delivery some time next week."
- "You can handle the payments on a quarterly basis."
- "I think you're smart to make a purchase today before the price goes up."
- "You're to be congratulated for your wise decision."

“When a fact-finding session is properly executed, you elevate yourself to a professional level considerably higher than most run-of-the-mill salespeople.”

Make these comments before a customer consents to buy the product and the customer will get caught up in the momentum and will consent. Don't ask where customers would like an invoice sent, or if they would like to make payment today. Simply assume something. Even if it is incorrect, customers will correct you rather than stop you to say they won't be buying anything today. Of course, when customers express objections to any part of your presentation, or to buying, deal with their specific reasons for hesitating or not wanting to buy. Most often, these objections can be overcome easily when you provide more options that help meet their needs.

“Nothing happens until something is sold. And nothing is sold until a sale is closed.”

Get your customers into the act before they've agreed to sign on the dotted line by talking to them about their purchase in a way that

sparks their imagination:

- For a real estate sale: "Your family room will be right here where we are standing. Just look at this magnificent view you'll have when you are sitting on your sofa."
- For an insurance sale: Paint a vivid picture of how your clients will live a life of comfort "because they had the foresight to plan for the future by purchasing this annuity."
- For any sale: Project a negative future by showing what can happen if they don't buy.

"Closing a sale doesn't happen only at the end of your presentation. Closing a sale is far more complex and involves everything from selling yourself to properly answering your prospects' objections."

Select words that assume a sale. For example, use "when" instead of "if." Use the first person plural "we" and "let's." Using "when" assumes the sale, but using "if" plants the thought in the customer's mind: "Maybe I'll buy this and maybe I won't." Using "we" and "let's" makes customers feel like they are not alone and lessens their decision-making burden.

Reading Buying Signals

Beware of reading body language and subtle signals. They aren't always as they appear. Sometimes a customer crosses a leg away from you simply because that foot is asleep, not as a sign of rejecting your pitch. Other signals are more easy to interpret and more consistent. For instance, when people start to look around the room instead of paying attention to your presentation, you're losing your customers' interest.

"Sincere people aren't greedy. Don't make such a profitable deal for yourself that your prospect won't want to do business with you again."

Avoid stereotyping customers and assuming that certain kinds of people have more or less money to spend, or buy one kind of product but not another. That will only cost you a lot of sales. Bring your customer into the act by interacting with the product if it is tangible or by telling a good story about it, if it is not. Be a good listener, so you can determine your customers' needs. If you are listening well, you can address their problems or objections, even before they make them known later on in the presentation. Of course, plenty of customers let you know with obvious comments that they do not intend to buy. Don't be so busy talking that you miss their comments. Give them the space in the conversation to comment.

"People are a lot smarter than some people give them credit for."

Everyone has an ego. The bigger the ego is, the easier it is to read. Appeal to a customer with a big ego by reinforcing it. A big ego simply means a high opinion of oneself and shouldn't be confused with the term "egotistical," which is actually the opposite and is conceited behavior by someone with an inferiority complex. Those with big egos believe in themselves and like to take risks. That means they have the self-confidence to make buying decisions.

Handling Objections and Procrastination

Objections don't mean that the sale is lost, quite the contrary. Often customers come up with obstacles to the sale in order to get more information or to better meet their needs. Deal with those issues, and you can make the sale. One of the most common objections is one of the trickiest to deal with: customers who want to talk to friends, family members, or spouses before consenting to the purchase. If those people are not with the customer at the time, you may lose the sale if they offer objections or talk the customer out of the purchase. Encourage customers to act on their own and flatter them for doing so. Encourage them to call those they would like to confer with so the decision can proceed without the customer leaving.

"Everything you do is done with the thought in mind that your prospect is going to buy your product."

To overcome procrastination, consider the following techniques when a customer says, "I want to think it over:"

- Recognize that procrastination may be due to fear. Continue to discuss the product with the customer to alleviate fears and the procrastination may vanish.

- Recognize that their unwillingness to commit may have been triggered by you if you have not been acting confident.
- Show your customers that you are there to help them and flatter them so they will want to make the decision right then and there, and not look like wimps.
- Appeal to the customers' egos to reinforce their decision-making abilities.
- Tell them how acting now has advantages.

Controlling the Sale

During the sales presentation remember the following:

- You are there to teach and help the customer.
- Sell with intensity but do not oversell or bully your customer.
- Prevent interruptions. Do not accept phone calls.
- Remember that your presentation is also a fact-finding mission: you want to uncover your customers' wants and needs.
- Act with confidence and authority throughout the presentation.
- Be honest about what you and your product can deliver.
- Remember that no two customers are alike, no two presentations are alike, and no two deal closings are alike.
- Offer your customers the pros and cons of buying vs. not buying.
- Remember that you are there to solve your customers' problems by meeting their needs.
- Be friendly but create a sense of urgency so the customer will want to commit as soon as possible.

“One of the first lessons taught to every law student is, ‘Never ask a question when you are cross examining somebody on the witness stand without knowing the answer beforehand.’ The same lesson applies to selling. And never ask a question that requires a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer unless you are dead certain the answer will be ‘yes’.”

Just as a corporation has a way of doing business, so should you as an individual salesperson. Your beliefs and methods should consistently influence your daily sales activities. You must be committed to providing outstanding service to your customers. Once you do so, you will enjoy immense success. Of course, a company that is not driven to providing the best customer service will hamper a service-oriented sales person. You may want to move to a more service-oriented organization.

The Sale Begins After the Sale

Closing your initial sale is just the beginning. Repeat customers are the foundation for every successful business. You must provide outstanding service to every customer, not just a select few. This attitude is widespread in Japan, where salespeople refer to the customer as kami-sama, which means "God." In Japan, then, each customer is treated with the utmost respect. The Japanese are far more service-oriented than any other nation of businesspeople. No wonder Japanese companies do so well in the United States. We often think that the success of a Japanese product marketed in the U.S. must be solely due to the excellence of the product. Product quality varies, but the high quality of service assures the success of Japanese products in the United States. This leads to repeat business and referrals by satisfied customers.

“Effective salesmanship is based on two-way communication. While you must present your product or service convincingly, the ability to listen is equally important. Understand how a prospect thinks and feels.”

Remember that your job isn't simply to go from one sale to the next, putting all of your effort into new customers. You must make the time to take care of your existing customers because they will then become repeat customers and will also refer you to everyone they know. Make one customer happy, and you will automatically get many more. "Give your customers so much service they'll feel guilty even thinking about doing business with somebody else. It's service like this upon which great sales careers are built because you can go back and close sale after sale again and again."

“Your job as a salesperson is to solve problems.”

There are no shortcuts. Selling is not just hard work, but smart work that depends on techniques and philosophies that not only build your career but also enrich your customers' lives.

About the Authors

Joe Girard is the author of the best sellers *How to Sell Anything to Anybody*, *How to Sell Yourself*, and other classics on sales techniques. He has been one of the world’s most successful salespeople and was listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for twelve years as "The World’s Greatest Salesman" for his record car sales at a Chevrolet dealership in Eastpointe, Michigan. He has received numerous business awards and has addressed such top corporations as General Motors, Hewlett-Packard, General Electric, IBM, and many others.
