



Sales Academy

Part seven

Keep your tank topped up; selling is a journey not a destination. Pro-Train4Results' **Paul Rowlands** presents the final part of his sales training series.

It's been seven months now since the first part of the sales academy and in this final part we look to complete the journey of the sales process by concentrating on recognising buying signals, closing techniques and how to answer objections. All of these elements are contained in the Conclude section of the ABC sales process of Attention, Build and Conclude created by Pro-Train4Results.

So what are buying signals? Well, this is where the customer asks you questions or it could be an objection; yes, I did say an objection. Many people confuse the latter thinking that if someone is objecting they are not interested – wrong. In the majority of cases it means they are unsure about the product or service you are providing and need further discussion to make sure it meets their needs/requirements.

Some examples then of buying signals; it could be:

- *A question about your product or service, which could be positive or negative*
- *A question relating to information you have just given them or something you covered earlier in the conversation*



➔ In an ideal world, we would not get objections but, in the real world we know this is not the case, so what should we do with them?

- A change in their voice to an inquisitive and investigative mode
- A request for a sample or to look/touch at the product you may be selling
- Any comment about the price
- The customer voluntarily extends the time of the discussion/meeting

Having then detected buying signals we then need to close. There are a wide range of different types of closing techniques. However due to space constraints I would like to share with you two options. Before I do so, it is vital to remember not to close too early or too late. Too early and you may have not given the relevant information to the customer or asked the right number of open questions to close the sale. Too late and the customer may have lost interest!

Our decision is to select the right time when we believe the customer has full understanding of our product/service and how it will benefit them/their business. (Remember last month's article; people buy benefits not features!)

The first example is the trail close – 'If we can deliver your goods by 10.30am would you then be happy to place your order with us'. Or 'would you be happy to proceed on the basis that if we can...' The key word here is 'if' which is a little word with a big meaning.

This is an excellent way to establish if the customer is ready to purchase and, in the psychology of selling, conditions the customer to the process of closing in their subconscious mind.

Some people say they hate closing and applying 'pressure' to their customers. Firstly, I do not agree to high pressure sell-

ing as this is the old style and completely out of sync with the modern consultative approach and, secondly, it is at odds in this channel; it is like oil and water in the same jar – it will not mix!

So here is an excellent solution to this which is called the any 'concern close' which also happens to be my favourite.

'Up to this point we have covered XYZ do you have any concerns so far?' Or 'Are there any reasons based upon our discussions so far that would prevent you buying from XYZ?'

Why is this example my favourite? Because it can be used at any stage of the closing process to make sure the customer is happy with what you are proposing therefore negating the risks of closing at the wrong time of the discussion. It is also a great way of establishing the customer's interest and bringing the sale to an end in a soft, natural/relaxed way.

In an ideal world, we would not get objections but, in the real world, we know this is not the case so **what should we do with them?**

- Do not fear them
- Welcome them – it could be a buying signal!
- Listen to them and don't interrupt before the customer has finished
- Clarify the objection and empathise with the customer

- Qualify that our response has satisfied the customer issue or concern by using 'the trial' or the 'any concern close'

How do we handle objections utilising empathy prior to our response?

- I completely understand the importance of that however...
- That is a key issue, but what if...
- I appreciate your point and it is valid but if...

By empathising first with the customer ensures they feel comfortable that we have been listening to them, taking their thoughts and comments on board prior to our response.

Once the objection has been handled you can then as, previously suggested, select a closing technique to conclude the sale!

Talking of which, that also concludes the final part in the current sales academy. Some points to remember though before I sign off; firstly, selling is a journey not a destination. Make sure you learn from your mistakes and seek constant improvement (remember my first article about Socrates' law of cause and effect). Secondly, make sure you differentiate yourself and your company and as always, attitude conquers everything. Go out there and make it happen, good luck. ●

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