

# 5 Easy Steps to Closing Big Sales

Great Sales People don't just close a lot of deals. They also make it look easy. They don't wrestle with objections or give up half their commission to make a sale. They don't chase prospects from one pointless follow-up to another. Most importantly, they *enjoy* selling.

They don't have to pressure their customers with fake urgency offers. They don't feel their blood pressure go up when it's time to ask for the sale. They just close a lot of sales and they make it look easy. Why is this?

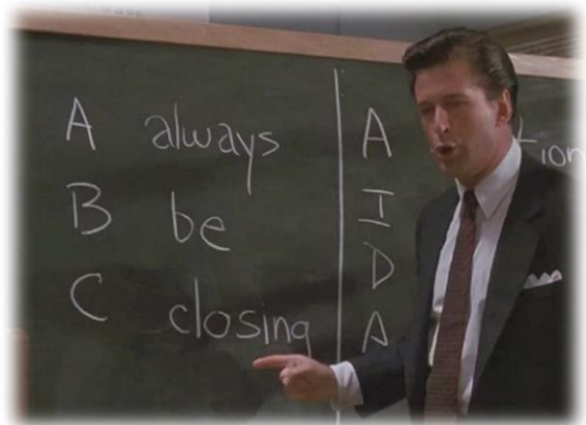
Amateur Sales People assume it's because Great Sales People aren't "afraid of rejection." The truth is, great selling is a skill. And like any other skill, it can be learned and mastered. In this whitepaper, I'll share five easy steps to making this happen. Any Sales Person who masters these steps can easily double or triple their income over the next 18 months.

I know this sounds hard to believe, but I think you'll see why as you apply these steps for yourself. Let's lay a quick foundation before we dive in...

## What Does it Mean to "Always Be Closing?"

Most Sales People have heard the "ABC" (Always Be Closing) cliché dozens of times. But what does it *really* mean? In my experience, even a lot of sales trainers don't really know.

It doesn't mean you should "assume the sale" every 90 seconds. It simply means you should seal up ALL possible objections BEFORE they have a chance to happen.



This is easier than it sounds. If you've been in sales more than a few weeks, you've already heard every possible objection...

1. **Timing Objections:** *"Let me think about it," or "Get back to me in 6 weeks."*
2. **Money Objections:** *"We can't afford it right now," or "We'll come back when we have the money."*
3. **Decision Maker Objections:** *"I need to talk to my \_\_ and get back to you."*
4. **Competitor Objections:** *"I got a better offer from your competitor."*

Ordinary Sales People try to address these objections AFTER their presentation. Not only does this kill their momentum, their presentation often doesn't fit the prospect's buying needs. In many cases, they make their entire pitch, only to discover that the prospect never planned to buy in the first place.

But great Sales People close ALL objections either BEFORE they make the presentation OR during it. Sometimes they start this process before they even set the appointment. This is why Great Sales People *seem* to attract more "lay downs." It's not because they're lucky. They're simply following a process from start to finish.

Imagine a room with five doors. Now, imagine yourself in that room with your prospect. The first four doors represent the four most common objection types...

- **DOOR ONE:** Timing Objections
- **DOOR TWO:** Money Objections.
- **DOOR THREE:** Decision Maker Objections.
- **DOOR FOUR:** Competitor Objections.

Only the fifth door represents a closed sale. At the end of your presentation, your prospect will walk through one of the five doors. Your job is to close doors one, two, three and four, and lead your prospect through door number five.

True, 50% to 80% of your prospects will leave by one of the first four doors. But your goal is to make these non-buyers leave as soon as possible. This way, you'll avoid wasting time chasing people who were never going to buy in the first place. This, as you'll see in a moment, is what it means to "Always Be Closing." And we'll be covering five easy steps to making this happen.

In steps one, two, three and four, I'll show you how to close doors one, two three and four. In step five, I'll show you how to lead your prospect through door number five and close the sale. By the time you master all five steps, you'll be leading a lot more prospects through door number five...

## Step #1: "How soon do you plan to \_\_\_?"

Ask this question before you even start your presentation. Here are some examples of how you'll ask it...

- "How soon do you want to move into your new house?"
- "How soon do you want to take your new car home?"
- "How soon do you want to hire someone for this project?"
- "How soon do you want to have your alarm system installed?"

Notice each \_\_\_ represents a "closing action." Notice also that I use "your \_\_\_" wherever possible. This question accomplishes two goals. First, it reveals how serious your prospect really is. Will they buy sometime soon? Or are they wasting your time?

In my experience, rejection isn't a Sales Person's biggest hurdle. Their biggest hurdle is discerning between idle curiosity and genuine interest.

When you ask this question...

*"How soon do you want to move into your new house?"*

You should know the difference between this...

*"Hopefully August of this year."*

And this...

*"I don't know, we're just looking right now."*

Of course, the second response isn't always a lost cause. It's a matter of HOW they say it. What does their voice tone and body language tell you? Are they idly curious, or are they REALLY just in the information gathering stage?

I know, some sales managers push you to convert EVERY prospect into a sale and not "cherry-pick". But, don't be fooled by stories about "that one prospect who bought the



whole store" after EVERY sales person wrote them off as a looky loo. For each one of these rare stories, hundreds of others end with the Sales Person chasing a tire kicker into the black hole of "call me in a week" follow-ups.

People love to buy. But they also love to shop. Some shoppers like to pretend they can afford things they can't. Sure, a few of these *might* buy anyway.

But most will pretend right up until you ask for the sale. But then, their *"let's make-believe I can afford this \_\_\_"* fantasy crumbles, they hit you with a flurry of objections and disappear like a cuttlefish in a cloud of ink.

Your first goal in asking this question is to smoke these time wasters. Your second goal is to reveal *where* your prospect is in the Buying Cycle. Are they just looking for information? Are they evaluating a "short list" of you and your competitors? Or, are they closing in on a decision?

Ordinary Sales People treat everything like a one call close. They assume prospects at the information gathering stage will never buy. Sometimes, this is smart. Other times, it's a waste of a good lead. In my book "The 24 Hour Marketing Miracle," I lay out a specific plan for pitching each of the Five Buying Stages. But that's an advanced topic for another time.

For now, your goal is to use this first question to determine how far along your prospect is in the Buying Cycle. This will go a LONG way in helping you apply the next four steps...

## **Step #2: "How much have you budgeted for \_\_\_\_\_?"**

This is another qualifying question, so be sure to ask it as early as possible. Here are some examples of how you'll ask it...

- *"How much have you budgeted for your monthly payment?"*
- *"How much have you budgeted for your new bedroom set?"*
- *"How much have you budgeted for your project?"*

This question reveals a couple things. First, it tells you whether you're dealing with a "Price Shopper" or a "Value Shopper." This is the most important thing you can know about your prospect (I'll tell you why in a moment). Price Shoppers typically give you this familiar objection at closing time...

*"I can get the same thing from your competitor for less money."*

In most cases, they're NOT getting the "same thing." They just think they are. This is because the first, and last, thing a Price Shopper looks at is the price tag. Even when you pitch them on quality, they respond with something like this...

*"Yes, I want quality, but...[INSERT RANDOM PRICE OBJECTION HERE]"*

Sure, sometimes this means you're not clearly communicating the value of your offer. But in many cases, you're dealing with someone who cares more about cost than value. Such people make horrible prospects and even worse customers.



Price Shoppers complain more. They create more drama for your customer service team and hence have a net negative impact on your company culture.

They're typically grumpy, negative people who won't refer anyone else to your business. If they do, their "friend" probably won't trust their advice anyway.

On top of all this, they're always ready to leave you for a cheaper alternative. The good news is, Price Shoppers are rare.

If you're attracting a lot of them, this question will change that. And when you DO get them, I suggest you set up referral program with your cheaper competitor and send them there. Don't try to convert them into Value Shoppers. You'll be trying to change a belief system they've probably had for decades. Even Professional Psychologists have a hard time doing that. So, that's the first goal of this question.

The second goal is to uncover your prospect's *expectations* of cost. If they're expecting to pay less than what's realistic, you'll need to prepare them for the surprise when you reveal the price. And beware of people who say "money is no object."

People who have a lot of money don't typically brag about it. Especially when talking to Sales People. In fact, people with money are usually ruthless negotiators. Some of them will act broke just to get a better bargain at the close.

I can't tell you how many times I've seen a Sales Person fall for this trick, only to later discover their prospect was a millionaire. It's a lesson many Sales People never learn. So don't be fooled by the "money is no object," line. Get a specific answer.

Now, a lot of prospects will dance around this question or give vague answers. That's when you follow up with a softer question like this...

*"That's okay, what's your ballpark price range?"*

Or this...

*"Just so I don't overshoot your budget, what's your ballpark price range?"*

And yes, you should ask this question! True, some prospects won't like it. They'll assume you're asking so you can start with your most expensive offer. But that's just their perception, so don't let it phase you. Just assume all your prospects understand why you're asking, and let them imagine whatever they want. More often, they'll understand that you're just trying to help.

Finally, if your prospect gives you a specific figure, pick a response that best suits the situation. For example, you might say...

- **WITH BUDGETS TOO LOW:** *"Can you invest a little more for the best \_\_\_\_?"*
- **WITH BUDGETS TOO HIGH:** *"Good news, you'll have some cash left over!"*
- **WITH BUDGETS JUST ABOUT RIGHT:** *"That's just about right. Sounds like you've done your homework!"*

Again, pay attention to their voice tone and body language. Even prospects who give vague, defensive or dishonest answers will reveal a LOT with their non-verbal communication. Once you've got a specific answer, lighten the mood by asking your prospect why they're shopping for your product or service. Make this question casual and conversational, like this...

- *"So what made you want to move to a new house?"*
- *"So, what made you decide to replace your bedroom set?"*
- *"So, what made you decide to hire a copywriter?"*

This question is important for two reasons. First, it will uncover prospect's buying motive. That'll become important when we get to question number four. Second, it will break up any tension you might have created by asking the first two questions. Once you've chatted with your prospect for a minute or so, move on to question number three...

## Step #3: "Who will be making this decision with you?"



This question smokes out any last minute decision makers your prospect might call on. And believe me, you NEED to know this up front.

Ordinary Sales People are afraid to ask this question. They just cross their fingers and hope this momentum killing objection never comes up.

But remember, Great Sales People deal with objections BEFORE they happen. That's why they close more deals with less stress. And trust me, if your prospect plans to call on another decision maker at the last minute, they'll do it whether you ask in advance or not. So you might as well ask.

Now, your prospect can answer this question in one of four ways. So let's take these one at a time and I'll show you how to handle each one...

- **RESPONSE #1:** *"No one. It's just me."*

This is what we want. If you're talking to the real decision maker, you're probably looking at a low-drama negotiation. But you should *never* assume that without a little more probing. So use this question as a follow up...

*"Okay great. And will anyone be advising you on this decision?"*

This will smoke out any "hidden" decision makers. And since your prospect could call on someone for a second opinion at the last minute, it's better to find out sooner than later.

- **RESPONSE #2:** *"Yes, my [HUSBAND/WIFE/BUSINESS PARTNER]."*

In this case, get a meeting with BOTH decision makers as soon as possible. If there's more than one, find out how many you're dealing with. In my experience, more decision makers mean more drama and more delays. Your deal could also be derailed at the last minute by a rogue advisor, and for the dumbest reason possible.

Again, your goal is to present your offer to ALL decision makers (at the same time) as soon as possible. If this is out of the question, consider walking away from the deal.

Sure, some multi-decision-maker deals might close. But most of them will descend into the murky whirlpool of deliberation and delay.

With husband/wife decision makers or business partners, again, find out WHEN you can talk to both spouses or both partners. If you aren't talking to the primary decision maker, try this question...



*"When can we meet with your [husband/wife/business partner] and discuss this together?"*

Again, listen closely to HOW they answer this question. Note their body language, tone of voice etc. If they don't agree to introduce you, try this...

*"If your [husband/wife/business partner] is part of this process, we should include him/her to shouldn't we?"*

Again, pay attention to HOW they answer. If they start tap-dancing, you might be dealing with what I call a "decoy decision maker." By this, I mean that the spouse or partner might not be a second decision maker at all. They're just an excuse to duck out of the deal instead of giving you a direct "no." So pay attention to your prospect's non-verbal communications and trust your gut.

Whatever you do, don't count on your prospect to sell your offer to the other decision maker! You have the training and expertise, they don't. So get a meeting with both/all decision makers as soon as possible.

- **RESPONSE #3:** *"It's just me. But I'm a liar."*

Okay, I'm being a little facetious here. Your prospect won't actually TELL you they're a liar. But some prospects will *claim* to be the decision maker when they're not. Instead, they'll be gathering information FOR the decision maker. In my experience, this typically happens when...



1. You're talking to the husband, but the wife is the decision maker.
2. You're talking to someone who is gathering information for their boss (See RESPONSE #3 below).

My best advice here is to go with your gut. If you're dealing with a middle man, the FIRST thing you want to know is whether they CAN close the real decision maker. I learned this the hard way. In 2001, I negotiated a \$250,000.00 proposal with a "Marketing Director" of a company you've probably heard of. His parents owned the company and had to ink the final deal. That should have been my first clue.



I made the rookie mistake of assuming that if HE said yes, his parents would trust him and sign off. It didn't happen. Looking back, I realize I didn't follow my gut or my experience.

First, I was talking to a 30 year old "man" whose parents had plopped him directly into a six-figure, executive position, right out of college. That was my second clue. It was the only job he'd ever had. That was my third clue.

After weeks of talking by phone and email, my prospect presented my offer (alone) to his Dad, the CEO. I hear Daddy shot the offer down in a record 90 seconds.

After the deal died, I tried calling the father myself. By that time, his son had already "burned the lead." Turns out, the father wasn't even happy with his son's job performance. He'd plopped him into the position out of raw nepotism. And since the father didn't care what his son thought, I became *"that guy from the company Steve thinks we should hire."*

I know. I broke my own rule by not asking for the meeting with Dad. But learn this from my mistake: no matter how good your message is, the *messenger* is the common denominator. The same is true in domestic households. If you sense you're talking to a husband whose wife won't let him buy your product without her permission, don't waste your time. Even if he wants to buy, his wife could shoot your offer down as "another one of my husband's silly ideas."

Get in front of the REAL decision maker, or get the middle man out the door and get on to your next prospect. If you decide to talk to the middle man/woman anyway, do this...

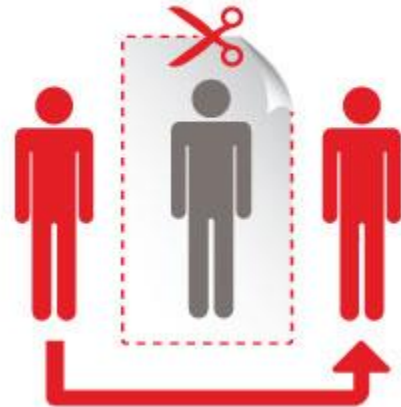
- **RESPONSE #4:** *"I'm just gathering information for my boss."*

This is the most challenging scenario, for several reasons. First, because you're dealing with an employee. Not a manager or an owner. Employees don't think like entrepreneurs. They think like ordinary consumers. They're likely to shop you on price OR, at best, on the commonly known features of your product or service.

But I'm guessing it's the sophisticated features that set you apart from your competitors. A business owner, or a manager, will understand why these features are important. They'll understand the VALUE they add to the bottom line. But employees don't think this way. They're not invested in the business. So even if you pitch your salient features to the middle man, they won't "get it."

So what should you do if you're approached by a middle man/woman? Give them the information they want. But don't try to turn them into an "Emergency Sales Person" for your product.

Just get enough information about the company AND the Boss and contact the decision maker on your own time. And don't interrogate the middle man. Just be charming and pepper the conversation with a few strategic questions.



Ask what competitors they're looking at. Ask what their experience was like talking to those competitors. Do this using the tips we cover in Step #4 (below). Once the middle man/woman is gone, treat it like warm lead. Drop something in the mail, or pick up the phone and make a call directly to the Decision Maker yourself.

If you've built up some rapport with the middle man/woman, open your conversation with the decision maker by mentioning that conversation. The fact that you took the initiative to call could be enough to put YOUR offer at the top of the pile.

## **Step #4: "If I can \_\_\_\_\_, will you \_\_\_\_\_?"**

Before you ask this question, you'll need to know two things. First, find out what competitors your prospect is considering. Use this question...

*"What other offers/companies are you looking at?"*

Next, use these two questions to find your prospect's hot buttons....

1. *"What did you like about [competitor #1]'s offer?"*
2. *"What did you NOT like about [competitor #1]'s offer?"*

Notice you're asking what they LIKE about your competitors AND what they don't like.

The same question applies if they're already using one of your competitor's product or service.

Then, you're ready to ask one of the most powerful negotiating questions.



I call it the *"If I can \_\_\_\_ will you \_\_\_\_"* question, and it has two parts...

1. An *"If I can \_\_\_\_"* offer from you.
2. A *"will you \_\_\_\_"* request to your prospect.

Ideally, this question should include one of BOTH of these...

1. An offer to match OR to beat what your prospect **LIKES** about your competitor's offer.
2. An offer to minimize OR eliminate what your prospect does **NOT** like about your competitor's offer.

Here's a fill-in-the-blank example of this question in action...

*"If I can give you [COMPETITOR #1 POSITIVES] without [COMPETITOR NEGATIVES], will you [CLOSE ACTION HERE]?"*

Or, if you can only offer an increase in positives, your question might look like this...

*"If I can give you [COMPETITOR POSITIVES PLUS YOUR POSITIVES], will you [CLOSE ACTION HERE]?"*

Or, if you can only offer a decrease in negatives...

*"If I can give you [COMPETITOR POSITIVES ONLY] without [COMPETITOR NEGATIVES], will you [CLOSE ACTION HERE]?"*

If they're not considering, or using, a competitor, use these two questions to uncover your prospect's positive and negative buying triggers...

1. *"What's the most important thing for you to have in \_\_\_\_\_?"*
2. *"What's concerns do you have about \_\_\_\_\_?"*

For example...

1. *"What's the most important thing for you to have in your new house?"*
2. *"What's concerns do you have about moving into a new house?"*

And here's a fill-in-the-blank example of how you'd use these two pieces of information...

*"If I can give you [POSITIVES] without [NEGATIVES], will you [CLOSE ACTION HERE]?"*

Or, if you can only offer the positives, your question might look like this...

*"If I can give you [POSITIVES], will you [CLOSE ACTION HERE]?"*

If you get a yes, and if you've asked the first two questions properly, you're probably looking at a sale. Now it's time to pitch your product.

Customize your pitch using the negative and positive selling points uncovered by your *"If I can \_\_\_\_\_ will you \_\_\_\_\_"* question. Then, use this final question to close with confidence...

## **Step #5: "Any more questions before you \_\_\_\_\_?"**

This is your big closing question. Here are a few examples of how you'll ask it...

1. *"Do you have any more questions, before you sign the agreement?"*
2. *"Do you have any more questions, before we set your first appointment?"*

3. *"Do you have any more questions, before you make out the check?"*

If you've followed the other four steps, your prospect should be good to go. But, there's ONE super important thing you MUST do RIGHT after asking your closing question...

SHUT UP!

I don't care how uncomfortable the silence is or how long it lasts. If you speak first, you're three times more likely to lose the sale! Shut up and let your prospect come to their own conclusion. Worst case scenario, they'll will back-peddle on a previous answer about timelines, budgets or other decision makers.

For example, if they told you there were no other decision makers, they might stall by saying...

*"I need to talk to my wife."*

Or, if they said their budget was \$10,000.00, and your offer is within that range, they might walk it back and say...

*"I need to see if we can afford this."*

Don't take the "objection" literally! Remind them of their previous response, and ask them what's holding them back.

Most of the time, they'll realize that they're stalling and they'll move directly to yes. Other times, they'll repeat one of the four common objections.

Handle the objection by gently reminding them of their previous answer. Most people will close themselves when they hear their own words repeated back to them. Keep in mind that if you've gotten them this far, you've got a 90% chance of getting a yes if you just remain relaxed and confident and treat the objection like it's not a big deal.



Once you've dealt with the last minute objection, don't wait for them to think of another one. Just ask your closing question again, and make it more direct. For example...

1. *"Okay, go ahead and sign the agreement and we'll get started."*
2. *"Okay, is morning or evening better for your first appointment?"*
3. *"Okay, go ahead and make the check out to \_\_\_\_."*

And that's the last of our easy five steps to closing more sales. I know there's a lot of information in this white paper. I suggest you practice each step one at a time. Make sure you're comfortable with each one before moving to the next.

You should feel completely relaxed and confident when asking each question and handling each objection. By the time you master all five steps, you'll be making more sales and more money than ever, and spending a lot less time with unqualified prospects.