
Closing the Sale as a Network Marketer

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How to get a commitment out of prospective customers.

by Michael L. Sheffield

Question: I just started working with a network marketing company with some great products. I'm using the products myself and focusing on selling products before I start trying to recruit people. My problem is that people I talk to seem interested, but I have trouble getting them to commit to buy. The typical response is "Let me think about this. Call me back later." What could I be doing wrong?

Answer: First, let me commend you on your commitment to be your own best customer and to learn how to sell your products before jumping into the recruiting process. If you don't believe in your products and understand how to motivate others to become customers, you can't transfer that ability to those you recruit into your organization in the future. Let's look at some areas that can help you be a more effective salesperson.

After you've presented the products, you want your customer to take action. Everything you've done so far has been working toward this moment: the close of the sale. Studies indicate that 63 percent of all lost sales occur because the salesperson failed to ask the client to make a purchase.

Your first task is to develop an effective close. Think about various ways of saying "Will you buy my products?" Write them out and memorize them. Practice delivering them, and learn to adapt them to various situations.

Ordinarily, the close will occur at the conclusion of your presentation, but it can happen at any time. In the middle of your presentation, you may sense your prospect is quite interested in a particular product. At that time, it is completely appropriate to say "I agree with you. This item is one of the best we have. Let's make a note on the order pad right now so we don't forget it during the remainder of the presentation."

The key to closing the sale is taking advantage of the right time. Don't delay. Many salespeople don't believe they've closed a sale that quickly, so they keep talking--and actually talk themselves right out of the sale. If the prospect makes comments like "Maybe I should," "Perhaps I could," or "It sure looks good," stop talking and start writing, or risk losing the sale.

Here are a few ways you can gently prompt your customer toward action:

Get your customer to agree with you. Your sales presentation should be a series of powerful, motivating reasons to buy. That's the purpose of building your presentation around features and benefits. Your objective is to obtain complete agreement from the prospect. You actually want him to get in the habit of nodding his head, of voicing his agreement.

When the sales points are presented in terms of benefits, they become personal to your customer. When that customer agrees to a few points in a row, you can usually assume he's ready to make a purchase.

Take the order. You should already have your order pad and pen in hand, so you're ready to write up the product order as soon as the customer agrees. Once your presentation is complete, go back over the products you've presented and confirm the items in which the customer had previously expressed an interest. After you've finished, request that your customer sign the order, and ask if they'll be paying by check or cash.

It's to your advantage to have some inventory of your products with you, so you can deliver them immediately. If not, arrange for your company to drop-ship the order or set up a time when you can return with the order.

Once you've written the order and accepted payment, you can congratulate yourself on completing a successful sales call. But you're not quite through yet.

Obtain referrals. Every time you call on new customers, you should end with a request for the names of people they know who might also benefit from your products. When you've successfully completed a sale, your customer will usually be willing to pass along the names of neighbors or friends. It's much easier than you might think. All you have to do is ask. You'll find the referrals you obtain will develop into a never-ending source of new prospective customers.

Once you've been given some names, use them immediately. Don't ever let a referral get cold! If a referral is in the neighborhood, go right over, ring the bell, introduce yourself, and say his or her friend thought he or she might be interested in some products you offer. This opening does one very important thing for you: It establishes your credibility. You are not just a door-to-door salesperson. You are a friend of a friend, and usually that's enough of a recommendation to get you in the door and enable you to make a product presentation or leave some samples and brochures.

Recruit. After mastering the selling process, it's time to begin selling your other product, your business opportunity itself. If you've concentrated on selling your product and turning the prospect into a customer, it will be easy to suggest he or she consider joining your business. In fact, the opportunity to buy at wholesale for personal use as well as earn some extra income usually appeals to many prospects. And, most important, remember that a potential customer who tells you "no" brings you one step closer to that lifetime customer who says "yes."