

## E-LESSON #23: Closing

### GENERAL AGENDA



#### “NATURAL” WAYS TO CLOSE WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE A JERK

*By Paul Weyland*

Failure to close a sale is like cooking an excellent meal and then never bothering to taste it. It's like going to watch a glorious sunset and then looking east instead of west. What's the point of doing all of the work and then not reaping the reward? Selling is the modification of the behavior of another person. It is your job to guide the prospect to a mutually beneficial conclusion. The onus to close is entirely on you. Rarely does the client close himself. Remember...if you don't ASK for the order, you won't GET the order. And as long as you're asking for something, why not ask for a long-term contract?

This section is all about closing. We'll give you several techniques for drawing out objections and closing the sale. ***Objections are a good thing.*** That means that your prospect is interested enough in your proposal that they have questions. Or, they have an opinion about it. Perhaps their opinion is based on ignorance about advertising or marketing or your station. It's your job to flush these things out so that you can educate your client properly. Remember that educated clients buy more than uneducated clients.

#### ***Closing doesn't have to be sleazy***

Closing is simply using subtle ways to look for buying signals (interest in your proposal) and then draw out any objections.

Look at good retail salespeople and the natural way they guide your behavior. “Can I take that to the counter for you?” “Why don't you try that on?” “Can I wrap that up for you?” “Would you like to wear that out?” All of these suggestions are designed to help draw out objections and close retail customers. In broadcast sales, we too have tools for ferreting out objections and closing deals.

## **Natural closing techniques**

Here are some of my favorite closing techniques. They are all logical and natural ways to flush out any remaining objections and guide your client toward your common goal. **Customize** the close for your personality style and the personality of the person you are dealing with. Make closing easy and natural for both you and the client. Each selling situation might be different. As we'll see, **mixing** several closing techniques is usually best.

- **DIRECT CLOSE** - Just ask for the business. "Let's do it." Nike uses the slogan, "Just Do It." After finishing your presentation you would simply say, "Hey...let's do it," and then wait for any objections.
- **SUMMARY CLOSE** - Once you've finished your presentation and you realize you haven't gotten any client objections, go through your proposal again point-by-point. If you get an objection, stop and deal with it, then continue your summary until you have finished. Then say, "Let's do it."
- **ASSUMPTIVE CLOSE** - From the beginning of the presentation you assume that the client is going to buy. You start with, "Here's what we're going to do." If there is an objection, for example if your client says, "Whoa...wait just a minute. We're not doing anything yet," apologize for being over-eager, identify the objection, handle it and then use the summary or direct close.
- **SRO CLOSE** - Standing Room Only. Creates a sense of urgency. "I recommend that if we want to own Mondays and Tuesdays, let's **lock this schedule in** now so that we don't run into inventory problems down the road." You'll notice that I used the words, "Let's lock this schedule in now." This expression helps convey a sense of urgency to the client. If you publish avails, it is helpful to bring them with you when you visit the client so that he can see for himself that your inventory is getting "tight."
- **MINOR POINT CLOSE** - Close the client on minor elements of the proposal. "Do you want to start on Tuesday or Saturday?" Or, "I like both spots, but I like the way spot #2 begins. Which one sounds most logical to you?"
- **MAKE ME AN OFFER CLOSE** - **This is a last-resort close** designed for the client who says your proposal is "too expensive." It helps keep the client from saying no and allows you a continuing dialog, so that you can defend your proposal. "Well, if this is too expensive, what do you think it's worth?" Obviously, you won't sell the schedule for what the client "thinks" it's worth, but this technique

helps you establish that at least the client perceives some value in your proposition. Clearly in the client's mind you have not finished conveying the value of your of your audience over price. Go over ROI again until the client perceives value over price.

- **THE PEN CLOSE** - This close is used frequently by people in the automotive and the insurance businesses. It's an intriguing psychological exercise and I've seen it work many times. Once you've made your presentation you say, "Let's do it," You then place the contract and a pen in front of the client. If the client has no objections they typically say something like, "Well, I guess this is where I sign," and they sign your agreement. Other times the client will pick up the pen and start twirling and playing with it in their hands. This action indicates that the client is still "in the game" but still has some questions or objections. As you systematically handle remaining questions or objections, the client will sign the contract.

Use multiple closes. For example, you might start with the ASSUMPTIVE close, telling the client immediately, "Look, here's what we're going to do." If you don't hear an objection after you've gone over your proposal, use the DIRECT close and say, "Let's do it." If the client continues to waiver and say nothing, use the SUMMARY close. Go back over your presentation and say, "Well, I think we agree on the situation. Now here's the objective....strategy...(etc.)" and try to ferret out the objection.

**Close early and close often** during your presentation. It's not difficult and it's not "cheesy." It's natural, and it must be done. Remember Alec Baldwin as the sales VP from Corporate in the film "Glengarry Glen Ross"? His advice to Jack Lemmon and the other cast members was, "ABC. Always Be Closing." Good advice. You too, should *Always Be Closing*.

You must educate your client, ferret out objections and then ask for the order. If you don't, all of your hard work was for nothing. Use several closing techniques, draw out all objections and go from **NO** to No to no to *maybe* to **YES!**

**Practice and use these closes.** If you don't, you're like a ship without a rudder. You're just treading water. You "ain't goin' nowhere." And if you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there.

### **HUGE SUGGESTION**

When the client says yes, you must LEAVE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. If you stay, the client will likely get buyer's remorse and change his mind or revise the amount he agreed to spend with you. After the client signs the contract, get up and leave. Your business is done for the time being and the client has other things to do. Say, "thank you very much. I'm going back to

the station right now to lock these spots into our system and consult with our production people.”

And of course, if you don't ask for long-term contracts you won't get them. Remember that long-term contracts are good for you and the client. Here's a reminder from one of the first lessons we had this year on why long-term commitments are good for both you and your client.

### **What's in it for you? Security...on many levels**

- **You cannot get rich** in this business unless you have long-term business. If you don't have long contracts, you start every month with a big, fat zero. You are out on the streets in the middle of a broadcast month, beating your head against a wall trying to get clients to sign up for a week or two with money they haven't budgeted. With several long-term customers you've got money in the bank. You start a month with thousands on the books. Anything you add after the month has started is gravy. Your boss loves you and you're making LOTS of money. Salespeople who make lots of money are unlikely to quit or get fired. What will you do with all of that money? Retire rich someday? Or wind up living under a bridge somewhere snacking on beetles for sustenance?
- **You keep the vultures away from your clients.** Without a signed, long-term agreement you have no insurance against theft. Your “friends” at the little agencies and from other media will see or hear your client on your station and go after your account. Without the long-term agreement you are vulnerable and the vultures will eventually pick you clean. **With the long-term contract**, your client is locked in with you, immunizing you against parasites from little agencies and the other stations.
- **You become a resource to the client, instead of a pest.** Imagine that I worked for a sales company that sold soap. And that every time you saw me I was trying to sell you soap and tried to recruit you into my sales organization. What would you do if you saw me coming? “Run Forrest, RUN!” And, what if you had a “gate keeper” or secretary, and he told you that I was holding on the phone for you? He or she would say, “It's that soap guy Paul Weyland again. Do you want to talk to him?” What would you say? You would LIE to keep from talking to me. **Without the long-term contract** every time the client sees you, you have your hand out asking for money. You're just like the little Chiquita girls in Mexico. “Por favor...are you doing anything this month? You ran with us last month. Por favor...just a little something?” Every time you see your client you bring with you the implied threat of asking for money. You're no fun to see anymore.

- **You could build a life-long client relationship. With a long-term agreement** your visit turns into a treat. Every time the client sees you, you have valuable information on competitors, or you're there to help them when they're short-handed. Or you're providing them with concert tickets, CDs, DVDs and other "perks" from the entertainment industry. Think about it. In a way, you become the client's conduit to the fabulous world of the entertainment industry. And, with the monthly "hitting up for money threat" out of the way, you can begin building a friendship that lasts years, even a lifetime. You transcend the "business relationship" level and move on to the status of TRUSTED FRIEND. If a Chiquita from another station tried to take your business away or said anything derogatory about you or your station, your client would come to your defense.

***What's in it for the client to have a long-term agreement with you?***

- **Insurance against "BAD word of mouth" advertising.** Have you heard the objection, "Well, word of mouth is the best form of advertising"? I agree that word of mouth can be the best form of advertising. But it can also be the worst. What happens if you have a good meal at a restaurant? You might tell a couple of people. But what if you had a horrible dining experience? Who would you tell then? You'd tell EVERYBODY. It's like the old "ripples in the pond" analogy. When you throw a pebble into the pond it causes ripples that cause other ripples which cause other ripples. One bad customer experience could turn into a nightmare for a local business. In fact, one negative experience could ruin a fifty-year reputation for a company. Radio and television advertising is CONTROLLED WORD OF MOUTH. You and your client control the words. One reason your client should maintain a long-term schedule on your station is to help put out those little pockets of insurrection that might develop because one customer had a problem with your client's business. A long-term agreement with your station provides insurance, or a layer of insulation for your client. It's logical. Your client needs to manage branding and mind share among your listeners or viewers. If problems develop, your client does not want his good name branded with rumors and innuendos. When this happens, the "tail is wagging the dog". CONTROLLED WORD OF MOUTH means brand insulation for your client.
- **Your station has listeners or viewers who will buy what your client is selling this week.** If your format or program matches your client's demographic, and provided your client's business isn't seasonal and doesn't have marketing problems, then logically and statistically you have listeners or viewers that WILL BUY what your client is selling THIS WEEK. But how hard is your client making it for these consumers to buy from him WHEN HE'S NOT FISHING IN YOUR

LAKE? Human beings are like light switches. We're either ON or we're OFF for various products and services. If you know you need new tires, you are ON for tires. You are much more likely to zoom in on any advertising having to do with tires. Once you've bought tires, you go into OFF mode and all of those tire store ads and commercials mysteriously disappear. People come ON and then go back OFF again at all different times. Remind your client that there is no question that a percentage of your audience are ON for what he's selling RIGHT NOW. Every minute he's not casting good bait on your lake, he's missing fish that are ON. Your client must maintain a constant presence on your station if he wants to catch his share of fish.

- **Branding means future customers.** You have viewers or listeners who are OFF right now for what your client is selling. But sooner or later, chances are that many of them will come ON. Your client must BRAND those consumers. He casts good bait on a regular basis on your station. He gets these fish who aren't hungry right now, used to his bait. When they finally do get hungry, they might go for your client's bait FIRST. By consistently branding your audience your client is capturing mind share. He's educating people about who he is, what he does and how to get in touch with him. When it's time for these people to buy, perhaps they would consider shopping his business instead of buying from one of his competitors. Effective branding is like money in the bank for your client.
- **We are the client's "ticket to the show".** When your client signs a long-term agreement with you, imply that in addition to all of the logical reasons he has for doing so, he gets "preferred client status". That means several good things. For example, he may get rate advantages. His spots are booked in advance and are less likely to get "bumped". But here's another massive reason it's in his best interest to have a long-term relationship with you. YOU become the client's conduit to the *entertainment world*. Face it. We're in the entertainment business. What we do for a living is generally perceived to be cool and exciting. Most local direct clients have never been to a radio or television station before. Now with the long-term contract, he's going to get to visit often. He becomes friends with on-air personalities and management. You may be able to supply him and his family with CDs, DVDs, video games, concert tickets, theater openings, films, travel and other special perks. He achieves a certain social status with friends and relatives who do not have his "influence" in the entertainment world. Through special events hosted by your station he meets other "movers and shakers" who own businesses in your community. Ladies and gentlemen, we are in SHOW business. The problem nowadays is that too much of the SHOW is gone and it's

become just plain business. Let's put the SHOW back in SHOW BUSINESS and share the fun with our clients.

### ***How to ask for long-term business***

Asking for a long-term contract is so easy. Instead of proposing a local direct schedule for just a week or a month, suggest a schedule that runs every week of the year. Why wouldn't you? What's the worst thing that could happen to you if you asked a client for a long-term commitment? I did some research and last year, not one single broadcast salesperson was killed and eaten for asking a client to sign a long-term contract.

*There is an on-line companion video provided with this lesson.*

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