



By Carl Davidson

About the Author

Carl Davidson is president of Sales & Management Solutions, Inc., a consulting firm specializing in sales and management video training and live seminars exclusively for the water equipment industry. He authored several books including *Secrets of Accountability Management* and *Financial Secrets of the Water Improvement Industry*. His articles are read by more than 60,000 sales professionals monthly. Send comments to him at davidson@salesco.net. For a free demonstration video and list of products and topics, call 800-941-0068; www.carldavidson.com; davidson@carldavidson.com.

I am very fortunate to be able to work with great salespeople around the country. Last month was no exception as I had an opportunity to meet a great closer from the home improvement industry who showed me a close I was very impressed with. This close is short and simple and if you learn it and try it, I believe it will help a lot.

Part of being a good closer is taking the time to learn good closes until they are smooth and automatic. I say automatic because one reason many people fail is that they have to think too hard at the moment of truth. You should fall into a close. It should just happen. It should look like you are so confident you will get the sale that the close just naturally falls out.

No close will work without a good demo. You have to find your customer's hot points and get them excited. You have to hit emotional buttons. Also, it is very important to ask questions as you demo. You can't tell them, you have to ask them. "Is that the kind of water you would like to have?" "Is that the soft skin you prefer?" This technique is used to get the customers used to saying, "Yes," and to get them to say and believe that they want your product.



The "Congratulations Close" begins when you return to the table after a good demo. You bring the soap flasks with you but you don't use them unless you are turned down.

You turn to the couple, smile and say, "Other than price or payment is there anything preventing you folks from improving your water today?"

If you have done a good job, most customers will say there is nothing else, as those are the last barriers to selling. At this point, you put your hand across the table, shake hands with them and say, "Congratulations, because I am not going to let price or payment stand between you and the improved water you want for your family."

What happens is that you have taken what they said as meaning they are buying and you have already given them the universal sign that a deal is stuck. It is a nice smooth, friendly way to get a close. Just start writing the order. The only reason they can stop you is for price or payment, so be ready to handle any objections they bring up along that line. As I have discussed in many other articles, handle all price objections by referring back to how much they will save from using the equipment.

A Tale of Two Salesmen

Even though the fellow who shared this close with me is one of the best and smoothest closers I have ever had the pleasure of working with, he is not going to make it in our industry. In his first month, he barely made enough to get by and was outsold three to one by a salesperson who had no industry or sales experience.

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Why? It is because he considers himself a great closer (which he is). He feels he shouldn't have to prospect.

"You give me the leads and I close them." He waits for the company to call him with appointments. The other salesperson we trained at the same session is not yet a great closer. He is selling about 20 percent of the demos he completes. However, he has made it a rule to call on neighbors wherever he goes and to canvass the neighborhoods where he has made a sale. The result is that a

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lesser closer made \$1,500 last week, while a good closer is just getting by.

I wanted to share this close with you, because I feel it is powerful and exciting. However, this story points out that no close will work unless you do. No matter how good you are at closing, the true measure of success is the measure of how many people you went out to and performed a demo for. By all means, learn good closes and practice them until they are smooth and seem unrehearsed, but never forget that your income is directly tied to the number of demos you generate. One great salesperson said, "Our industry is just talking to everyone you can about water."

You do the math. The industry average closer sells one in three. That is a 33 percent closing rate. If you study, drill and rehearse, you may be able to increase your closing rate to 40 percent. If you do one demo per day or 300 per year, your increase of 7 percent would mean you would close 20 families more by working on your close and that would be good. However, if you raised the number of demos you did by 50 percent it would increase your sales and your income by 50 percent or five times as much as improving your close.

Closing is fun. Closing is exciting. But the real money is made by going out and getting more demos. **WQP**

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