

By Carl Davidson

About the Author

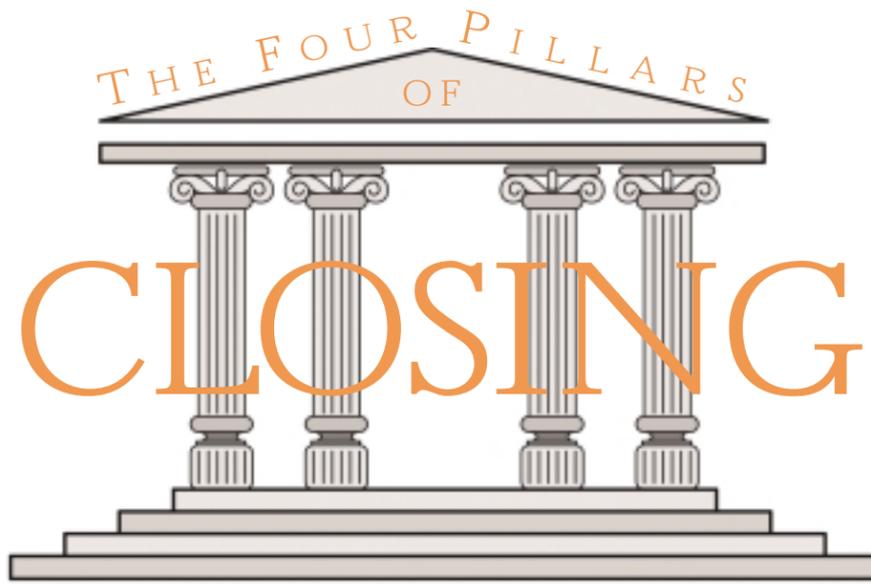
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There are four pillars to closing in our industry. Many salespeople leave out one or two and that greatly hampers their ability to get as many sales as they deserve. This article will discuss all four in an effort to remind new recruits and veterans of closing techniques that work.

Say 'Yes' Now

The first pillar and the largest by far is the pillar of the *trial close* or preliminary close. What is this? It is soft, easy questions that the customer can say "Yes" too before he is ready to actually buy. Think of it as a way of taking his temperature. The more trial closes you get a "Yes" to, the closer you are to the sale. Start trial closing as soon as you meet the prospect. You can ask questions such as, "Is good tasting water important to you?" Who would not answer that one in the affirmative? However, the act of saying "Yes" gets him used to saying it and moves you closer to the sale. Later in the demonstration, you move to trial closes like, "Is that the way you would like your skin to feel?" and "Is that the kind of clean you want for your family?" I recommend asking between



60 and 100 trial closes during the course of the demonstration.

Trial closes not only help move your customer toward the sale, they perform several other important functions.

- They allow your customer to participate in the demo. This may seem like a small point, but if your demo is a one-way conversation or lecture, they will not react as positively as if

it is a two way with them listening and answering questions. If they see the pattern and know you will be asking questions, they can't snooze as you speak.

- Trial closes allow them to say "No" without it being the end of the sale. If you ask a question such as, "Do you see how that would benefit your family?" and they say, "No" it doesn't mean you have to pack up and leave, it sets you up to explain and help them agree. Weak salespeople gamble the entire sale on one big question, "So, did you want to get it?" Strong salespeople build a base of hundreds of questions from very soft and

leading to the more make-it-or-break-it type.

Once you have a firm base of "Yesses" that continues to grow as you move through the warm up and begin the demo, you are on your way.

Rehearsed Close

The next pillar in closing is the *demo close*. You should have a specific way of closing planned that you automatically go into when you reach the end of the demo. As many readers already may know, I recommend a strong assumption close. For example, you bring the flasks back to the table, hold them up and ask, "If it didn't cost you a penny more, which of these waters would you want to have in your home?" They always point to the soft water. You simply say, "Great, I'll get the paperwork started," and then pick up a pen to write the order.

I have noticed over the years that salespeople who have an end-of-demo close planned, practiced and rehearsed are much stronger closers than those who arrive without a plan or a clue.

Details Last

The third pillar is the product info close. I train my clients' salespeople to hold off on presenting product features until the end of the sale. I know this is controversial and many salespeople cannot wait to tell the customer everything they know about the product. The theory behind my method—which is backed by 30 years of success—is that many consumers do not understand, need to know or want to know technical details. I am one of those consumers. If you start talking about the shape of your resin or size of your manifold, it is a one-way ticket to snoozeville for me and for many others. So, I suggest you do not take 10 minutes up front to amaze prospects with the arcane knowledge you have of the secrets of softeners in the beginning. Many customers prefer to purchase based on the benefits such as cleaner clothes and softer skin. If you have built a base of trial closes and tried the demo close but they still have not committed to the purchase, it is time for the product info close.

You simply state that you know they will be happy with your product because....Then, you can explain the features and benefits that you know will be most important to them from your earlier questions.

Don't forget the benefits. For example, many salespeople say things such as, "We are a family owned business."

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Well how nice for your family. What's in it for the customer? That's all they care about. Maybe a family owned company cares more about reputation. Maybe the family employees are better trained or better supervised. Maybe you give the client your home phone number for emergencies. Whatever the benefit, make sure that every time you state a product feature you also state a benefit and end with a trial close such as "Do you see how that would be of benefit to you?" If they say "Yes," get your pen and start writing.

### Invaluable Incentives

So far, you have used three of the four pillars. The last pillar is an *inducement close*. It is used last when the demo close and product info close have failed to get a signature. Instead of leaving, go for an inducement. It could be a special finance rate if they go ahead now, free installation, a "full half ton of salt," a discount or the most powerful inducement of all: a soap package.

Whatever inducement you use, it only will work well if you have saved it until the end and you have practiced a smooth and believable delivery. The inducement will push a number of clients over the edge. They want to buy, but they need a reason to justify action. The inducement close has been used since the beginning of selling. It works today just as it has

## INCENTIVES

Here are some ideas on how you can use the **incentive approach** to close the sale.

- A **special finance rate** if they purchase now.
- **Free installation.**
- **Free salt.**
- A **percentage off the total purchase.**
- A **soap package.**

since the first time it was used because it is deeply etched in human nature. Don't shy away from it and feel you are above it. You buy because of inducements—we all do—so use it to help your clients make the right choice.

One of the benefits of looking at the sale as four pillars is that it will encourage you to close at least three different ways and more attempts mean more sales. Take a look at the demos you are doing and see if you incorporate all four pillars. If you aren't, give it a try and I know it will help you close more and close consistently. **WQP**

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### Electronic Water Conditioners

The C-Series line of water softeners and filters includes a control valve that features double backwash, 36 selectable preprogrammed regeneration cycles, day override from one to 28 days, backwash and brining



## HIGHLIGHTS

ability to 21-inch-diameter tanks and treated water brine tank fill. The line also includes electronic meter water softeners, time clock softeners, manganese greensand units and backwash filters.

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