

Advice from the Strongest Closer in the Store

By Tony Dupaquier



I am amazed at the amount of time, effort, and money some dealers spend on generating customers instead of training the existing salespeople. Is it easier to generate customers than train salespeople?

Unfortunately, the only customers a business manager sees are the customers the salespeople were able to close. Therefore,

if a dealership needs more customers, its salespeople need to know how to close more deals.

Generally, the sales manager or general manager is the only manager who works with the sales team. When the same message comes from the same people every week, it becomes diluted, so the business manager should be involved. Business managers possess many skills that will help salespeople sell more cars, such as:

Communication Skills

Talk to the salespeople about the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication, especially during negotiations. Demonstrate how to match and mirror the customer's rate of speech, and stress the need for speaking in a calm tone of voice. Another key aspect of non-verbal communication is looking the customer in the eye, as this demonstrates trustworthiness and confidence.

Always Looking for the Opportunity to Close

Just as a business manager asks trial close questions during the presentation, salespeople need to ask trial close questions during their walkaround presentations.

Show the salespeople a trial close that has a high success rate. A good example is, "Can you see how that would benefit you?"

Asking for the Close

Too many salespeople ask the customer a question instead of asking for the deal. A typical question they might ask is, "How does that sound?" or "Is that okay with you?" These closes do not work, because they allow the customer to answer "No." They also imply that the offer is negotiable. A close should always come in the form of a statement. A great close for salespeople is, "Give me your okay right here, and I will finish up the paperwork." If a dealership utilizes a sales menu, the same assumptive close will work for business managers, "Which one of these programs works best for you?" Giving a statement instead of asking a question dramatically increases a salesperson's closing percentage.

Knowing the Difference Between Objections and Questions

Knowing the difference between an objection and a question is difficult for some salespeople, especially for those who are new. When a customer asks a question, always answer the question, and then follow-up by asking another question. Teach the sales staff how to answer the question they hear most often, "What is your interest rate?" The reply to this should be, "Our average rate is 7.85 percent. Do you have any other questions?" Avoiding making up a story if the answer is unknown. This will ruin any credibility with a customer.

Giving Endorsements

Tell the salespeople the specific endorsement that should be given, and then role-play with them to ensure compliance.



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Depending on the process, a business manager may not want an endorsement from the salesperson. However, when an endorsement is used, a salesperson has the most success endorsing a service contract. The best time to give the endorsement is during the walkaround presentation when reviewing the manufacturers limited warranty, "This vehicle has a 3-year, 36,000-mile manufacturers limited warranty and a 5-year, 100,000-mile powertrain warranty. I recommend a service contract program that gives you full coverage for the entire 100,000 miles." Traditionally customers react by giving a statement of agreement. If a salesperson asks this question and the customer agrees, it allows the business manager to say to the customer, "I understand you told the salesperson you are interested in the program that covers your vehicle for 100,000 miles." This makes it the customer's idea to investigate a service contract.

On a final note, educate the sales team on the importance of every customer seeing the business manager at the time of commitment. I also advise educating the sales staff on the benefits the business office offers customers and how they benefit the sales staff as well.

It is well known that the best closer in the store is the business manager. Teaching the sales staff the skills that make a business manager successful will generate more customers, increase the sales team's income, and increase the business manager's income as well.

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