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**What Successful Sellers Know – Others Don't ... The Subtle Art of Closing**

**By Paul Shearstone**

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Ask any salesperson, "At what point in the selling process does the 'Close' take place?" Eight out of ten will answer, "at the End". To be fair, they are not totally incorrect but they are, nevertheless, more wrong than right proving in principle and in practice, Perado's Law: Twenty percent of the sales force make eighty percent of the sales and profitability.

The questions that should then be asked are, "Why it is so many professional sellers have it wrong?" and, "What is right?"

For decades salespeople were [and still are] taught certain accepted selling fundamentals; the best being Dale Carnegie's 5-Steps to a Sale: Attention, Interest, Conviction, Desire and Close. Perhaps a little ahead of his peers, Carnegie's formula has certainly stood the test of time and continues to work. On the other hand, selling, like so many other disciplines, has many subtle layers that color the process, especially as it relates to the Close and like the 1/100th of a second that can separate a Gold Metal winner from Silver, the outcome in sales is equally dramatic.

The 'No Close' Know-Not!

The last couple of decades spawned some major changes regarding how sellers were to sell and redefined some of the rules of engagement. It also produced new selling gurus convinced in theory that the 'Art of Closing' was no longer in fashion. Things like their new Funnel approach all but eliminated the need to understand and hone closing techniques of any kind. History demonstrates that convincing though they were, in practice, they were dead wrong.

Regardless of whether one is selling pens, mufflers, computers or airplanes, customers still possess an innate psychological need to have what is often a new direction [the decision to buy] validated. Asking for the order and reaffirming the decision-to-buy a good one, does this and yes, it takes place at the end of the selling encounter. Not surprisingly, however, what transpires at the 'Front-End' of the sale –

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the point successful sellers know the art of the close actually takes place – is what allows this process to transpire.

From another perspective, we can draw parallels of closing–strategies to that of the last war in Iraq. Long before the firing of the first bullet or cruise missile launch, specially trained soldiers [Special Ops] had already been in Iraq for months covertly uncovering strategic information to send back to the invasion architects.

War experts agree and it's been well documented, the job the US and British Special Ops did was so exceptional it all but captured victory before the war in the Middle East ever took place. Interestingly, those who have read Tzu Sun's book *The Art of War*, would understand the uncanny parallels of the Iraqi campaign to his conflict strategies – conscious too of how he [Tzu Sun] would have certainly been impressed.

What, though, should we glean from this example? An overview of the battle strategy for the Iraq war clearly demonstrates the success of the campaign was front–end loaded: first understand the enemy. Learn its strengths, weaknesses. Uncover – ahead of time – what challenges may be faced. Then and only then, develop 'Practiced Strategies' expressly designed to overcome any such resistance. Simply put, the Iraq war was won in the quality of its Preparation – in keeping with Tzu Sun's mantra: The war is already over before the enemy believes it has even begun.

Drawing our parallels from this to selling, customers, although not our enemy, nevertheless put forward unique challenges [real or otherwise] requiring first, an intimate and compassionate understanding of their needs BEFORE the implementation of a strategy/process using proven/practiced skills designed to garner customer Trust, Rapport and Satisfaction [the Close] ever takes place.

The Bottom Line:

Successful sellers continue to hone their closing skills ever mindful of the importance closing and the 'Ability to Close' has to the success of the sale. The difference for them, however, is they see the art of closing from a point most others can only see through their rearview mirror.

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or

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**How To Negotiate The Price & Get The Best Deal When Buying A House!**

**By Kris Bickell**

When it comes to negotiating, I'm no expert. But when buying my house, I did not ask for everything I wanted, and to this day I still regret this decision! Again, there are no set guidelines for negotiating, but do what you feels right (and ask your realtor for help).

If you want an item fixed before you move in, ask for it to be fixed. If there is too many problems with the house and you want to walk away from the deal, go ahead (but check with your lawyer first to make sure you get your money back). There will be other houses.

Here are two final mistakes to avoid when buying your next house:

- Negotiate any item that you feel is important.
- After the inspection, you need to decide which items to ask the sellers to pay for to fix, and which ones you will fix.

You want the sellers to fix as much as possible, but you don't want such a long list, or a list with so many trivial little items, that the sellers just say "Forget it, we're not fixing anything".

Your realtors will help you with the list.

But negotiate any item that YOU feel is worthwhile, no matter what the inspector or realtor says!!!

Our house had an old pool in the yard. Our realtor knew it was old, so he didn't want me to include it on the list. So I didn't. But I felt it was important. And I should have included it. Because after we moved in, and looked at the pool closely, we decided to ask a pool company to come by to give us information on the pool. They said it was too old and rusted to bother fixing, and recommended we take it down! On our time, and at our expense.

The pool was on the house listing, so technically it should have been in working order. But because my realtor didn't want an old pool to be a stumbling block, I did not ask the sellers to fix it, and it became our responsibility. Costly lesson for us. (Which became even more costly when I tore cartilage in my knee while taking the pool down and needed an operation!)

Remember, the realtor does not make any money if you do something that causes the deal to fall through. So its in their best interest to make the reply to the inspection as "reasonable" as possible - it's in YOUR best interest to have the house in proper working condition.

So if you REALLY want something fixed before you move, include it on your list to the sellers after the inspection.

Finally, ask for proof BEFORE the closing that every item is repaired properly. (We didn't, and it created some unneeded disagreement at the closing when some of the items were not fixed to our satisfaction.) Go back and visit if you are not sure!!!

And walk through the house before closing.

In most cases, anywhere from a few weeks to a few months will pass from the time you have the house inspected to the time you move in.

A lot can happen in that time.

Your final "walkthrough" before closing is your time to make sure that no problems or damage has occurred during this time.

If you wait until the closing, nobody will want you to create waves (including you) by bringing up "loose ends". So take care of this a day or two before closing, or even the morning of closing. Check everything very carefully - and start getting ready to enjoy your new house!

It's not over until it's over!

If you find things going wrong after you move in, things that you thought were covered by your inspection report, you might have some options.

We found several problems – almost by accident – that should have been noticed by the inspector but were not. So we filed a complaint with our State Consumer Protection department against our inspector. And we were amazed at how fast he was willing to pay to fix these problems (fortunately for us!)

Not that we wanted him to pay for every little problem – many of which were part of the normal "wear & tear" of an older house. But the big things he should have found as unsatisfactory were the ones we asked him to pay for.

So, like the immortal baseball player Yogi Berra said, "It ain't over till it's over!"

Even if you only prevent one problem, you could save yourself a good amount of money!

Kris Bickell is the owner of [HouseBuying-Tips.com](http://HouseBuying-Tips.com), a site that helps first time home buyers avoid the costly mistakes that many new homebuyers make. For more tips on buying a house, getting a mortgage, finding a realtor, and getting out of debt, sign up for the free "How To Avoid These 10 Costly Mistakes When Buying Your First Home" email course at:

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