

**Investigative Selling®
with
Omar Periu**

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INVESTIGATIVE SELLING PRINCIPLES

What separates the superstars from the rest:

- ☞ asking questions
- ☞ listening
- ☞ observing
- ☞ taking notes
- ☞ problem-solving
- ☞ discovering new closes
- ☞ practicing effective follow-up

Most salespeople have a natural tendency they must learn to avoid. They tend to _____, not _____.

When you are *telling*, you are not discovering those things that will most benefit your customer. Choose to be as good a _____ as you are a _____.

The role of the investigator:

- ☞ ask questions
- ☞ search for facts and information
- ☞ discover wants, needs and issues

The only way you will learn when you are talking is if your words are in the form of a _____.

Success is as
much a matter
of style as it is a
matter of skill.
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INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #1

BECOME AN INVESTIGATOR. ASK QUESTIONS.

Discover your clients _____, _____ and _____.

90% of the time an investigator says very little.

They are gathering _____ without which they cannot solve the case.

They ask _____ and let the suspects (clients) do most of the talking.

They _____ their surroundings and the _____ of others.

They take _____ and fit the pieces of the investigative puzzle together, one fact at a time.

In the end, they give long speeches to show how _____ the _____ was important to solving the cases.

Being _____ is a pre-requisite to being successful as an investigator.

Key Points

Ask questions because you want to gather the necessary information that will help you offer the most benefit to your prospects.

Ask questions that will give you insight into the selling situation. Then utilize that insight in order to become a problem-solver for your customers.

Ask questions that enable you to provide added value to your clients.

Ask and you
shall receive.

The Bible

Investigative Selling Principle #1

Investigators think and act toward their prospects and customers in ways that make the customers feel most relaxed and comfortable in the selling situation.

- ☞ They think and act _____.
- ☞ They _____ more than they talk.
- ☞ They don't act before they have asked all the questions to get the _____
_____.

INVESTIGATIVE SELLING PRINCIPLE #2

GET INTO CHARACTER.

Questioning techniques set the stage for the remainder of your selling sequence.

The investigative salesperson:

- ☞ is a researcher;
- ☞ has a certain look;
- ☞ uses certain words: no slang, no profanity, enthusiasm, emotional words;
- ☞ acts with confidence.

Minimize nervous habits that could be considered offensive to the customer:

- Don't
 - chew gum,
 - twirl or touch your hair,
 - play with your mustache,
 - adjust your clothing.

Acting is a question of absorbing other people's personalities and adding some of your own.

Paul Newman

When I taped my presentation, I noticed the following habits that I will work to eliminate:

INVESTIGATIVE SELLING PRINCIPLE #3

DEVELOP THE INVESTIGATIVE INSTINCT.

LISTEN AND OBSERVE.

Active listening is:

- ☞ Leaning forward slightly with a focused look in your eye.
- ☞ Jotting down notes about what you are thinking.
- ☞ Nodding agreement and interjecting comments that show you're paying attention.
- ☞ Asking for clarification.
- ☞ Repeating back important points in review.

Active listening is not:

- ☞ Glazed eyes staring off into the distance.
- ☞ Pen poised over paper without writing.
- ☞ Tapping of feet or pen while someone else talks.
- ☞ Planning something else in your mind while someone talks.
- ☞ Thinking how you will respond to the last comment.
- ☞ Taking a mental vacation.

How to become an active listener: Get FOCUSED!

- F _____ back concepts to acknowledge the speaker and clarify possible misunderstandings.
- O _____ the speaker's body language.
- C _____ your emotions.
- U _____ gestures to demonstrate active listening skills.
- S _____ and organize your thoughts before responding.
- E _____ internal and external distractions.
- D _____ interrupt the speaker.

Customers will
tell you
how they want
to be sold.
All you have to
do is listen.

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Being a good note-taker demonstrates that you are a detail-oriented salesperson. Highlight the most important points after every meeting.

Words and phrases that help to relieve pressure situations:

Prospect: Your company failed to deliver what the last salesperson promised.

Salesperson: I totally understand your feelings. If I were you, I'd feel the same way and because of that, I would like to have your permission to ask a few questions so I can discover just where the breakdown took place. You see, Mr. Prospect, that particular salesperson is no longer with our company and I suspect he was let go for that reason. May I assume you would be understanding enough not to judge our entire company by one poor representation?

Prospect: No way we're going to pay this much money.

Salesperson: You're right, Mr. Prospect. In fact, XYZ Corporation felt the same way you do until their production levels increased by more than 20% and their quality control remained just as effective. Just how much too much do you feel it is?

INVESTIGATIVE SELLING PRINCIPLE #4

STRATEGIC QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES HELP YOU DISCOVER SPECIFIC ANSWERS.

Good questions:

- ☞ strengthen your sales efforts,
- ☞ give you a polished, professional manner,
- ☞ build strong rapport,
- ☞ establish common interest,
- ☞ put customers at ease.

Leading with questions

Step #1 - Say something that makes _____ sense.

Step #2 - Back up the fact with a _____ story.

Step #3 - Ask a question they'll most likely _____
_____ that leads to the next step in your presentation.

Step #4 - Use a _____ statement.

Six steps to building rapport through strong questioning strategies

1. Care about people--ask caring questions.
2. Strive to make your customers say "Me, too" instead of "So what."
3. Demonstrate your product and service knowledge by refusing to start your conversations presenting benefits and features.
4. Ask questions that allow you to use a third-party testimonial.
5. Be sensitive to customers' wants, needs and issues.
6. Keep in mind your customers will always be trying to avoid situations that they feel may hurt them and move toward selling situations that they feel will bring them benefits.

You're not finished
when you've asked
the right questions.
Understanding and
learning from the
answers is what
leads you
to success!

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Questioning Techniques

1. STP Questions (Seeking The Positive)

These are the questions that continuously solicit positive responses, or “Yeses” from the customer.

2. The Alternate of Choice Questions

This type of question gives your customers a choice to move forward, or advance the sale to a positive conclusion where everybody benefits. The most common Alternate of Choice question is that which is used to get the appointment. “Would Monday be a good day to meet, or is Tuesday better for you?”

3. Ricochet Questions

Ricochet questions are questions you ask in response to questions you hear from others. You briefly dodge the initial question, but take advantage of the clue from it to investigate deeper.

4. The “COP” Question

COP stands for Confirmation of the Positive. These are known as ownership questions. When the customer answers these questions, they have bought the product or service with their response.

5. The Know It All Questions

The Know It All questions, also known as sharp angle questions, are great tools to use after you have managed the conversation, allowing the customer to make a request that you know you can meet.

Prospect: Can I get delivery by September 1st?

Salesperson: If I can promise delivery before September 1, are you willing to authorize the agreement today?

6. Open-Ended Questions

These types of questions direct the conversation. These are your who, what, when, where, why and how questions. Open-ended questions are ones that require a more elaborate explanation from the customer.

Investigative Selling Principle #4

7. Closed-Ended Questions

Close-ended questions are good when you are working with a limited amount of time, or plan for a “Yes” or “No” in order to direct the conversation.

Example: “Did you experience a great deal of employee turnover these past twelve months?”

These questions help you get a handle on which open-ended questions you’ll need to ask in order to gather the information you need to help the prospect make a wise decision.

8. Solution Questions

These questions are great attention-getting tools. What could be more interesting than questions that lead to solutions you can provide for the customers’ situations?

Example: “It was our experience when working with XYZ Corporation that their productivity increased by 20 percent when first implementing our quality control system. Do you have room for a 20 percent improvement in your productivity?”

9. Problem-Seeking Questions

These questions specifically seek to uncover problems.

Example: “Your Facilities Manager informed me of a dissatisfaction with allotted space in the new factory. What spatial problems do you foresee within the first two years of production?”

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #5

INVESTIGATIVE SELLING IS A NUMBERS GAME.

What is prospecting?

It's what salespeople do to generate business; finding people who will benefit from their products and services and then convincing them to own.

It's building your business by meeting people.

It's using effective marketing strategies and proven techniques to create warm prospects.

Selling is finding
the people to
sell, then selling
the people
you find.

Tom Hopkins

Poor prospectors sit in the office wondering when the next hot lead will walk through the door or wait for the phone to ring.

Average prospectors will make a few calls, get a few rejections then quit for the day.

Exceptional investigative prospectors will keep searching until they find just the right prospect. They will ask questions of existing clients to find out what they enjoy most about their product or service, then seek out others who could enjoy those same benefits.

Protect yourself from rejection when prospecting

Layer #1 - Keep your _____ high. Make sure you exercise, eat a well-balanced diet and sleep well.

Layer #2 - Protect yourself with a coating of _____. Know your craft; identify your strengths and weaknesses; understand what has brought other top producers their success and do the same thing.

Layer #3 - Surround yourself with professional, _____ who will encourage you to pursue your dreams. Then believe in them and in yourself and know that you will accomplish those dreams and they will support your efforts.

Investigative Selling Principle #5

Layer #4 - Be _____. Look forward to the newness of each day--to its challenges and rewards.

Layer #5 - Carry a shield of unwavering belief in _____, a desire to succeed that is one-hundred times stronger than your fear of failure.

Working with your success ratios

Take two weeks and track your performance. Don't change what you have been doing, just go about business as usual. Then, change one little thing such as your opening line for the next two weeks and see if your ratios improve. If they do improve, keep using that new line and change another aspect of your prospecting method and track yourself again.

Your yearly sales volume goal divided by the number of working days in your year equals how much you need to earn each day.

Based on your sales ratio, how much activity does it require to reach the above number?

Five steps to effective time management that provide more time for prospecting

1. Keep a daily record of your time.
2. Arrange activities into blocks of time.
3. Delegate. By assigning less important tasks to others when possible, you have more time to plan, prospect and follow-up.
4. Identify time wasters.
5. Align your goals to your allocated time. How much do you want to earn doing what? How much time have you allocated in each day to achieve your goals?

Prospect the people you already know

- ☞ family
- ☞ close friends and acquaintances
- ☞ fellow hobbyists, golfers, card players
- ☞ church attendees
- ☞ club members
- ☞ children's friends and their parents
- ☞ school teachers, music teachers, scout leaders
- ☞ doctors, dentists, attorneys, counselors

Investigative Selling Principle #5

- ☞ at sporting events
- ☞ current and past customers
- ☞ customers that other salespeople have failed to follow up with properly who are in desperate need of your services
- ☞ other salespeople in related fields with whom you can swap names

Five steps for getting referrals

1. Focus in on _____ and _____.
2. Ask a _____ question.
3. Ask for _____ and _____.
4. Ask the customer to _____ the person for you or to make an _____.
5. If they resist, ask them if you can _____, a testimonial letter or both.

The itch cycle

If your investigations show that most of the company's consumers buy again every 18 months, you'll want to start tickling that itch a month or two before your past client has realized his or her need to scratch.

Prospecting methods and strategies

1. Face-to-face prospecting. Create a 60-second commercial for your product.
2. Prospecting over the telephone. Getting an appointment should be your major objective.
3. Prospect by mail. Provide just enough information about you and your company to give them an idea and a picture of your professional image, then leave them wanting more.
4. E-mail. Tends to be given a higher priority and gets you past the gatekeeper.
5. Internet. A great place to learn about your prospect's industry and business.
6. Fax prospecting. Gives the opportunity to provide specific information in writing.

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #6

MAKE THE INVESTIGATOR'S CONNECTION. DEVELOP AND BUILD RAPPORT.

Step One - _____ your surroundings.

Look at decorative colors, pictures, furnishings, seating arrangements, what's on the desk, and any indication of likes and hobbies that may be in the form of awards or trophies. Is he or she married? Does he or she have children? Do they look athletic? Read the expression on the face of your prospect as you enter. During the meeting is this person contemplative, negative, rushed or preoccupied?

For retail sales:

Compliment them on their appearance or their good taste.

Examples: "What a beautiful family you have."

"It's obvious you've done a great job parenting; your children are very well-behaved." "How old are your kids?"

Step Two - _____. Ask your client if it's okay for you to jot down some notes. Get out the pad of paper and all materials necessary to make the sale.

Step Three - _____.

Even though you've been asking questions all along to build rapport, when you sense a better relationship forming, direct the questioning for more pointed, planned results.

Step Four - Listen to _____ and _____ language.

People like to own from people just like themselves. So, match their rate of speech, tone of voice, body language.

Build rapport
first. Rapport
levels the
playing field and
reduces the fear
factor in your
customer.

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Three common behavioral types of clients:

Visuals

Sixty percent of the population is focused on images. What they can see is what they value most. They relate to the world through pictures and visuals. You can determine those people who are visually-oriented by observing their eye movement. When pondering a thought, visuals will look up to the high left. They'll use phrases such as "I see" or "Get the picture?" or "Do you see what I mean?"

Auditors

These types relate to the world through the way things sound. Their most common eye movement is to look from side-to-side and down. When looking down, they're in essence, getting visual distractions out of their way. You'll hear them say things like this: "Tell me!" "Listen to me." "Can I tell you something?" "I hear you." or "I hear what you're saying."

Kinesthetics

These are the types who relate to the world through touching and feeling. Their most common eye movements are to look down and to the right. With these people, you want to bring samples of your product for them to touch and feel. Hand them things to hold during your presentation. Get them pushing buttons if you sell any sort of equipment.

If your client gets ahead of you, use these words:

"Mr. Garrett, no matter what I tell you right now, it's going to be too much because I haven't been able to show you the value of working with our company and using our fine products."

When talking to a customer:

1. Don't talk about political beliefs.
2. Don't tell--ask!
3. Smile.
4. Use precise language and pronunciation.
5. Drop names of industries and their workers who have benefited from your product.

Investigative Selling Principle #6

Use Follow Up Notes

Follow-up Note After Presentation

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me yesterday. I look forward to working with you and (company), and will follow up in the near future to see if you have any questions.

Follow-up Note After Purchase

Thank you for showing your confidence in me and (your company name) by investing in one of our best products. I'm excited for you and look forward to serving your (_____) needs in the future. I will stay in touch to make sure your experience with us is exceptional.

Follow-up Note After Referral

Thank you for your vote of confidence in me and (company name) for referring (_____) to me. I promise you, they will receive only the best service. Thanks again!

Follow-up Voice Mail

Hi (name)! I just wanted to leave a short message and thank you again for meeting with me. My goal as a (_____) is to provide you with the most outstanding service possible. My direct line is (_____). Please call me if I can be of further service.

Follow-up E-Mail

Hi (name)! One of the nicest aspects of cyberspace is that I'm only a few key strokes away. I check my messages three times a day, so please feel free to keep me updated on how you are enjoying (_____). I look forward to hearing from you.

Follow-up Industry Article

(Name), I saw this article in (publication) and thought you might be interested in it. My main goal is to keep you updated on new trends that will help your business. Please call me if I can be of help.

Follow-up After a Special Occasion

Congratulations on your (promotion, etc.)! I really appreciate your friendship and look forward to working with you in the future. Again, congratulations!

Follow-up With A Personal Gift

(Name), please accept this gift as my way of saying thank you for allowing me to offer you my company's finest service. I truly enjoy working with you and look forward to keeping you updated on our company's new and exciting developments.

Follow-up After They Decline To Buy

(Name), thank you for your time in considering our (product or service). I understand our timing was off a little bit, and I look forward to serving you in the future. I will keep you updated on new products and services that will benefit you and your company. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to call if you have any questions.

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #7

DEVELOP THE QUALIFYING INSTINCT.

What is qualifying?

Think of the qualifying process as a step-by-step process of discovery.

Why qualify?

Qualifying your customers saves you many frustrating hours working with a customer who cannot be sold.

Effective qualifying strategies empower you with knowing the needs and wants of your customers.

Prepare a value statement about your product or company that will earn you the right to meet with that customer.

Example: “Mr. Jackson, there is a reason why your top three competitors allow me and my company to serve their needs. It’s because our product has been proven to increase their overall productivity in the areas of. . .”

Qualifying the customer will also eliminate many objections that arise from improper investigation.

Create a motivating environment for a successful sale

Owning any offering is an _____ process, sell with passion, with emotion.

Ask questions that get clients talking about how great a company they have or what a great project it is that they’re working on.

Example: “Mrs. Black, I’m so fascinated by your business. Tell me, how do you handle. . . ?”

Without proper qualification, you are like a ship without a sail--going nowhere.

Omar Periu

Ask permission to ask them some questions.

Example: “In order to know exactly what you need, Mr. Prospect, I’d like your permission to ask you a few questions that will help me better understand your situation. That’s all right with you, isn’t it?”

Where else can you get qualifying information?

- ☞ Your company
- ☞ Associate salespeople and peers
- ☞ Your prospect’s own customers and clients
- ☞ Local library
- ☞ Managers
- ☞ Trade magazines
- ☞ Newspapers
- ☞ Competitors/yours and your prospect’s
- ☞ Internet

Begin the qualifying or discovery process with yourself

I must continually:

- invest the time required to learn about my own company and its products and services.
- ask questions of my peers to discover their proven techniques and strategies.
- make a monetary investment in continued education and training in order to become the best.
- research my competitors and discover how they and their products or services differ from me and my company’s offerings.
- practice learned strategies and internalize the selling phraseology and proven techniques until they become a natural part of me
- look rejection in the face and move on to the next opportunity.
- accept the fact that even when I’ve done all that is required to put me in the “selling zone,” I am not going to win every prospect and close every sale.
- make only those promises that I know can be kept and win the prospect’s trust and confidence through my demonstrated knowledge and insightful questions.
- do all these things on a call-by-call basis to maximize my success results and minimize my customer’s confusion during the decision-making process.

Investigative Selling Principle #7

The six “knows” of selling

1. Know yourself.
2. Know your product.
3. Know your competitors.
4. Know your customer.
 - What does the customer own or not own now?
 - What are the benefits, features, or services they do or do not have now?
 - Given the chance, what features, benefits and/or service would they have if they made the decision to own today?
 - When do they need what you are offering?
 - What is their budget for your offering?
 - Who else is involved in the decision-making process?
5. Know your plan.
 - (1) What is your objective for the contact?
 - (2) How do you plan to meet that objective?
6. Know you can succeed.

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #8

INVESTIGATIVE SALESPEOPLE MAKE POWERFUL PRESENTERS.

**If you don't
control the
presentation
from the
beginning, you'll
never get control
of it when it's
time to close.**

Omar Periu

What is a presentation?

A presentation is simply your opportunity to position yourself and persuade your customers to see, hear and touch the superiority of your product and service.

Ten steps of mental and physical preparation for an effective presentation

1. Tell yourself "I'm a great presenter" until your belief and inner power builds and you can feel and believe the words!
2. Make sure that 80 percent of what you'll be saying is appealing to the customers' emotions (the why) and 20 percent to their logic (the how).
3. Delivering the message. There are two important elements:
What you say and how you say it.
4. Get out of yourself. Focus on the customer, the environment and the entire selling situation, not just on your performance!
5. Create a presentation table of success in selling. The legs of support are:
 - a. Products and services - Have you targeted the customers most suited to your products and services? Are you speaking to the decision-maker, and when will he or she be ready to buy?
 - b. Company - Is the company in a position to own your offering? Is your company able to supply the product and service that best suits your customers' needs?
 - c. You - What is your knowledge base? What are your qualifications? What training have you received? Are you the best in the company to represent your client? Do you have an unshakable faith in your ability to get the job done? Is your focus what is best for the customer?

Investigative Selling Principle #8

How is your attitude? Do you believe in your products and services?

- d. Closing the sale - Did you make a recommendation and ask for the business? Can they own today? Have you asked for the order?
- 6. Say to yourself that your presentation is powerful and effective, and your customers need to hear what you have to say.
- 7. Visualize who you want to become.
- 8. Imagine what customers will feel like when they own your product and service.
- 9. Become an investigator--get into character, ask questions, fact-find and gather information.
- 10. Enjoy the challenges of the selling process.

Keep the P.A.C.E. of the Presentation

- P** Poise
- A** Ability to be Articulate
- C** Count Two
- E** Eye contact

The 3X3 presentation method

- 1. Begin your presentation by telling the customer what you are going to tell them.
- 2. Then tell them in the body of the presentation.
- 3. Tell them what you told them in the conclusion or summary section of your presentation.
 - Step #1 - Who your company is.
 - Step #2 - What you've done.
 - Step #3 - What's in it for them.

If you want to design powerful presentations you must do the following:

- Know everything about your client.
- Create control by asking questions.
- Build "yes" responses and minor agreements.
- Separate yourself from the competition.
- Use sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.
- Present total solutions and benefits.
- Use positive word pictures.
- Prevent sales resistance by bringing up known objections.
- Respect and care enough about your customers to adapt your behavior in order to accommodate theirs.

Five steps to presentations that pack a punch

1. Listen for _____.
2. _____ for the presentation.
3. Take great _____.
4. Speak _____ and _____.
5. _____, _____ and _____ your presentation.

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #9

OBJECTIONS ARE THE CUSTOMERS' LAST LINE OF DEFENSE.

What are objections?

Objections are statements from customers who want or need to know more information about you, your company or your product and service.

There are only two types of objections:

1. Those that will slow down or stop the sale.
2. Those that, if taken advantage of, will move the sale forward.

Five steps to finding the real objection

Step 1 - Your customer is telling you their concerns--

_____ to them. You may want to postpone the concern by saying "I'll get to that in one moment." Or "That's a great concern. I'll cover that in my presentation."

Step 2 - _____ the _____ of the concern by rephrasing or reframing in a question form what was said.

Step 3 - Find the key to _____ the concern. The key is usually found within the concern itself.

Step 4 - _____ to see that you have answered the right concerns.

Step 5 - Go for the _____. If a close doesn't work, go back to benefits and features, and begin to build "yes" momentum again.

If there are
objections,
they're
interested.

Omar Periu

Objections allow you to do the following:

1. Spend more time with the customer explaining your product and service.
2. Point out what makes you and your product and service superior.

3. Make the customer comfortable with the knowledge that they will own the best and will be served by the best.
4. Offer added value and special services.
5. Be a problem-solver, a consultant.

To prevent some of the most common causes of objections, do the following:

1. Identify possible objections ahead of time. Then prepare answers to those objections. During the presentation, learn to turn the objection into a benefit.
2. Develop planned scripts that answer common objections.
3. Practice some closing ideas when those objections may occur. It doesn't have to be a set close, just what you might say should the opportunity present itself.
4. Come prepared with testimonial letters or on-the-spot references you can provide to the prospective customer in order to give you or your product credibility.

What causes objections?

1. _____ and _____
2. _____
3. Failure to build _____
4. Failure to _____ the _____

This is no time to A.R.G.U.E.

- A** Never _____ your goals at the expense of what is best for your customer.
- R** Never _____ to domination and control to overcome the objection.
- G** Never _____ the fact to persuade your customer to set aside their objections.
- U** Never _____ the power of investigative selling skills.
- E** Never _____ your chances for a return visit by fighting the prospect.

Handling objections or concerns

Step One: _____

You yield by acknowledging the customer and listening to their concerns.

Example: "You're right Mr. Smith. I'll cover that in my presentation."

Step Two: _____

After you yield, you turn the objection around with the words "as" or "and"

Example: "You're right Mr. Smith, and..."

Investigative Selling Principle #9

Step Three: _____

You advance by introducing new points or revealing more in-depth insight into their specific concerns.

Example: “You’re right Mr. Smith, but didn’t you say product turn-around time is critical to your ability to fulfill your contractual commitments? If so, wouldn’t you agree the minimal increase in product justifies the added value we could bring to you by significantly shortening your delivery cycles?”

Step Four: _____

This is when you ask for immediate action.

Example: “Would Monday or Wednesday be better for delivery?”

Common Objections and Words to Use

Prospect: I don’t just make decisions on the spur of the moment--like to think things over for a while, weigh the facts.

Salesperson: That’s the smart thing to do, Don, but when you’ve reviewed the facts and discovered that our product/service makes perfect sense to you, am I correct in assuming you’ll be ready to make a decision on our product/service?

Prospect: I’m really very happy with our current company.

Salesperson: Great! Let me ask you a question. Is this the first company to serve your needs with (product name), or did you make a change from a previous company to your current one?

Prospect: Oh, I made a change to our current supplier.

Salesperson: And, were you happy with the change?

Prospect: Absolutely!

Salesperson: Great! Would you agree it is smart to keep an open mind for opportunities that will bring you greater returns for your investment?

Investigative Selling Principle #9

Prospect: Of course!

Salesperson: That's exactly what I'd like to talk to you about. I give you my word. I won't expect you to make a decision for change that isn't going to dramatically increase your income and bring you a higher yield for your production. If I can do that, you'd be interested in hearing what I have to say, wouldn't you?

Prospect: I guess I would. Yes.

Prospect: I've already talked to one of your salespeople. I'm not interested!

Salesperson: I really must apologize for the other salesperson's inability to show you how much money you could save while still maintaining your standards of excellence your company is known for. If that was a while back, you may not have heard of our (name new feature) offered with a promotional incentive, have you?

Prospect: I've never heard of your company!

Salesperson: If you don't regularly read the Business or Wall Street Journals, you probably haven't heard of us. You see, Mr. Buyer, we believe our product speaks for itself and have worked hard to create an image that can be supported without high-dollar advertising. Instead, my company chooses to invest its dollars in higher quality products that bring greater benefits to the customers. Doesn't that make better sense?

Prospect: Yes it does, actually!

Salesperson: Let me provide you with some interesting information on my company (offer them some impressive statistics that are appropriate to your customer).

Investigative Selling Principle #9

Prospect: I like your product, but I'd like to shop around to make sure I'm getting the best price.

Salesperson: That makes sense to me, Mr. Buyer. I'd do the exact same thing in your shoes. Before you make your final decision could you give me the opportunity to talk to you once more? Is two weeks enough time for you to compare price, or would three fit your schedule better?

Prospect: Two should do it.

Salesperson: You know, two weeks is just about the time it would take us to prepare your new computer for delivery. If you'll authorize the agreement now, I'll make sure we get your final approval before delivery. That way, by the time you've discovered our company is who you want to go with, you can begin using your new computer immediately. (Pass the paperwork and say: "Here you go.")

Prospect: I would love to have your copier, but I just can't afford it at this time.

Salesperson: I know how you feel, Donna. I felt the same way until I found that by owning our ABC Copier, I could save enough printer's charges to cover our monthly investment in the machine. You're not opposed to saving money, right?"

Prospect: I just want to know how much it is.

Salesperson: Mr. Garrett, no matter what I tell you right now, it's going to be too much because I haven't been able to show you the value of working with our company and using our fine products.

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #10

STAY CUSTOMER-FOCUSED AND CLOSE THE CASE.

Closing is the
easiest thing in
the world to do
if you have done
every other step
properly to this
point.

Omar Periu

Use these questions to prompt buying signals from your clients:

1. Ask questions that require one of two positive responses. No matter what response they give you, what they've really given you is a buying sign.

Example: "Will we be training just you or all of your staff on the new software?"

Or, "Would you prefer delivery on Monday or would Tuesday be better?"

2. Ask questions that encourage your customers to assume ownership.

Example: "How many of your people will be using a copy machine on a daily basis?"

3. Sometimes you can prompt your customer to reveal buying signs by answering a question with another question.

Example: If your prospect says, "Do you have a mutual fund that is a little more conservative?"

You would question them with, "Are your financial goals safety-driven or return-driven?"

4. Ask assumptive questions.

Example: "Now, how do you spell your last name?"

Or, "What is your correct mailing address?"

Then answer with: "Let me just jot that down on the paperwork."

Or perhaps, "What is today's date?"

Then, "Thanks, let me just jot that down on your form."

Investigative Selling Principle #10

An effective close helps all parties R.E.L.A.T.E.

- R** _____ features and benefits and recap solutions.
- E** _____ customer doubts.
- L** _____ your customers with positive feelings about you and your product and service.
- A** _____ your customers by hearing them out.
- T** _____ it to the next step by simply filling out the paperwork or acknowledging agreement of the sale.
- E** _____ and adjust your closing depending on customers responses and behavior.

Ask yourself these questions, and you'll certainly be in a better mental frame for a comfortable close:

What will my customer feel like after they own my product or service?

What will I feel like after I close the sale?

Will I be able to walk away from the close knowing that everybody benefited?

Will my customers' experience be so positive they won't hesitate to refer business my way?

After recognizing buying signals, test close.

With a test close you investigate how close the buyer is to making a decision. A test close does one of two things:

- 1) It gives you agreement that they are ready to go ahead.
- 2) It gives you the area of concern or real reason they don't want to go ahead.

Common Closing Techniques

1. The "Where Are You Now?" Close

You will probably hear someone say they're not really sure about going ahead.

Example: "I understand how you feel. You know what, I don't want you to make a decision until you're 100 percent sure you are making a good choice. Just to let me know where we are at here, where are you now? Would you say you are about 80 percent sure of your decision to move ahead? (response) Let me ask you a question. What kind of reassurance would you need in order to feel 100 percent secure with your decision to move forward?"

2. The Price Is Too High Close

Example: “Let’s put aside the money issue for a moment. What is your vision right now of where you want to be five years from now? (response)

Okay, how important is it for you to achieve that goal? (response)

How will achieving that goal change your quality of life? (response)

Now let me ask you a very important question, John. How will saving and not spending the \$2,500 affect your lifestyle? (response)

If I understand you correctly, are you telling me it’s more important to hold on to that money than it is to (state their wants that your product or service can answer)? (response)

Level with me, John. What is this procrastination doing to your dreams? (response)

I thought so! When would you like to take delivery, Monday morning or would Wednesday evening suit your schedule better?”

Another method of approach when prospective clients say your product or service costs too much is simply to find out the exact dollar amount that’s bothering them and then handling just that amount.

Example: “In today’s world most things do cost too much! Will you tell me, how much too much you feel it is?”

3. The Shop-Around Close

If your company has any sort of guarantee or return policy, this is when you use it to close.

Example: “We have a written policy that states if for some reason you find a better investment, we will give you a full refund within 30 days. With this policy you win whether you keep the product or not. You can begin enjoying the benefits of the product today, yet still have the luxury of knowing if you find a better investment, we’ll take care of you. So why not have the best of both worlds and go ahead now?”

NOTE: I recommend using this close only as a last resort when they’re ready to walk out the door without your product.

4. The “Somebody Else’s Shoes” Close

It never hurts to tell a hesitant customer about someone else you worked with. Tell them how the other person felt, what their needs were and what the resolution to the story was. If they went ahead, talk about how the client is now enjoying all the benefits of your offering because they didn’t procrastinate, but said yes that day. Or you can tell a story of a customer who could have made a decision to own but chose to procrastinate. When they finally decided to buy, they missed out on months of enjoyment or the offering was in such demand that the investment was much greater than they had originally planned.

Investigative Selling Principle #10

5. The Soda Pop Close

This is an excellent close to use when price is an issue. Break down how much too much they feel the product and service is. Then, compare it to some way they could make a small sacrifice to have the product which is of much greater value. Break it down together to yearly, monthly, weekly, and even daily or hourly amounts if appropriate for your product or service. Then, compare it to something ridiculous like the cost of a soda pop or a phone call. Do it in the form of a question.

Example: “Would you be willing to forego a soda pop a day to drive this beautiful car you’ve always dreamed of owning?”

6. “I Need To Discuss This With My Spouse (Partner, Board, etc.)”

Example: “Is your spouse involved in the final decision?” If they say yes you need to regroup and close on the opportunity to give another presentation--with all the decision-makers present.

7. The Paperwork Close

This is used any time in the sales process when you feel the client is ready to own your products or services. You simply move onto the paperwork and assume they’re going ahead. If they don’t stop you, go from there, you’ve closed another sale!

8. “If I Can Deliver, Are You Ready” Close

This type of close can also be used to discover whether the objection is real or a smoke screen. In essence, you’re calling their bluff and trying to get them to show you their hand.

Example: The prospect says, “I wish the carpet were in earth tones.” You come back with, “If I could change the color of the carpet to just what you want, would you be prepared to authorize an agreement for sale today?”

9. The Third-Party Testimonial Close

When you've thoroughly answered every objection, and they're still hesitant, suggest calling one of your most satisfied clients or sales manager to have them handle any unanswered questions regarding your ability to fulfill their needs. This needs to be pre-planned and requires a certain amount of sensitivity on your part in order to not abuse your manager or customer's time. After the call has been made and your client has heard from someone else about the benefits of your product and service, ask for the order.

10. The Take Away Close

This is good to use with customers who like to make decisions on their own, ones who are internally motivated and are determined not to be influenced by your persuasive techniques. So, you simply take away the opportunity.

Example: "Mr. Howard, since you have been so hesitant to own our offering, I'm sure you have your reasons and I wouldn't try to persuade you to do anything to convince you otherwise. Maybe you're not ready to make a final decision. I'm curious what makes you so hesitant about going ahead today?" Shut up and listen for an objection then handle it.

11. The "I want to think it over" Close

Example: "I understand how you feel, Sam. Thinking it over makes a lot of sense. I'm sure you're not telling me this just to get rid of me. Just to clarify my thinking, what is it about this opportunity that you want to think over. Is it quality of the product? Is it the service I'll render? Is it the company? Please level with me, Sam, could your hesitation in any way be the financial aspects?"

The key here is to list all those things you know they've already agreed to and work your way down to the money.

12. Reduce It To the Minimum Close

Take the total amount of time that your product or service is used and reduce the amount of money they're hesitating about to how much that is each year, month, week, day or even right down to the hour that they'll be owning and using it. In many cases, the amount reduces to something so minimal that they feel silly even objecting about it.

13. The "WHY" Close

When your prospects give you an objection, simply say "Why?" You can say "Really, why?" Or, "Why is that?" The WHY close will help the prospect to elaborate on their area of concern and give a concrete objection to handle.

14. The Alternate of Choice Close

This type of close gives the customers two choices, either of which would mean they were moving ahead with the sale.

Example: "Mr. Jones, will your company need two fax machines, or do you think your secretaries could share a machine?"

15. The Assumptive Close

An assumptive close is direct, a "that's no bull" sort of close that asks for the business.

Example: "Mr. Buyer, you have agreed that your company needs our product, and I've shown you how to make the most return on your investment by handling your needs now, but leaving an upgradeable path for the future. After you've owned our computer for 120 days, I'm positive you'll discover the figures I've given you today to be conservative as to your actual savings." (Hand the customer the paperwork and say "Here!")

16. The Triplicate Close

This close is used when your product or service has at least three different options or choices for the client.

Example: "We have three sets of terms, Mr. Smith. It just depends on what works for you. The first is with payment in full, we offer a 5 percent discount. The next is designed for those who don't care for monthly investments. In that case, you can put 50 percent down now and cover the balance on receipt. Or, we can schedule 1/3 initially and then monthly amounts after you've taken ownership. Which one of these terms best suits your company's needs?"

17. The "If They Were Both Free" Close

This close is to be used when the client indicates they are going to go with the competition because they are less expensive.

Example: "Let me ask you a question, Mr. Buyer. If these two products were both free, which one

would you choose?” If they choose your product, the close is simply a matter of pointing out to them that you’re glad they have decided not to compromise quality for price. Then build value in your product!

18. The Real Reason Close

This is when your client throws a question or brings up an objection and you throw it right back for a test close.

Example: Your client says, “Do these Head® skis come in a package that includes the boots and poles?” You say, “Are you interested in the best price on a package, or would you rather have the freedom to choose your own boots and poles?” This gives you the latitude to find out if they are interested in price or the best opportunity.

19. The Mistake & Correction Close

This is when you ask your client the date or middle initial and repeat it back to them incorrectly. They then correct you. When they correct you, it means a “yes.”

Example: “Did you say you lived on East Main Street?” The client says “No, it’s West Main.” You say, “Great” and begin writing or filling in your paperwork.

20. The Summarization Close

In this close, you summarize all the benefits and features, build “Yes” momentum and ask a final closing question.

Example: “With your approval right here, you will begin enjoying the benefits of being a member of this health club and having the body you always dreamed of!”

21. The Value to the Customer Close

This close is used on the customer whose concern is that the product or service costs too much.

Clearly show them the return they’ll be getting on their investment. During your investigation, you should be able to learn what the prospect’s customers are worth to him or her. Then, determine how many more sales your prospect needs in order for your product to pay for itself. Then, ask the prospect how many more customers they will be able to attract by owning your offering. They have then overcome their own ‘price’ objection by telling you exactly when they think the product will pay for itself.

Investigative Selling Principle #10

22. The Competitive Edge Close

Never bad-mouth your competitor. Instead, earn the right to give your presentation.

Step #1 - Who are you currently using?

Step #2 - Are you happy with your present company?

Step #3 - Were you the decision-maker when the decision was made to use the current company?

Step #4 - If yes, ask them the benefits they received working with that current company.

If no, ask them if they are interested in increasing their bottom line profits or productivity or name their hot button.

Omar's Ten Tips on How To Become a Strong Closer

1. Assume that the prospect will buy.
2. Build the sale on minor agreements. Make it easier for the prospect to say "yes" than "no." Avoid phrases or statements in closing that will receive negative responses.
3. Don't get off the subject while closing. Many a sale has been lost because the prospect cooled off when the salesperson got off the subject. Use statements which will induce action, such as: "Let's go ahead with this," or "Let's set it up this way."
4. Back up your recommendation with good reasons for buying. Keep hammering away at the prospect's needs and how your recommendation will fill those needs. Return to the points that interest the prospect most.
5. To clinch the sale, demonstrate proof, such as: usage figures, testimonial letters, case histories and proof stories.
6. Be alert for closing signals such as statements and questions by the prospect. A change in tone of voice can also be an indicator that they are ready to own your offering.
7. Don't oversell. It's almost as easy to talk yourself out of a sale as it is to talk yourself into one. Silence is necessary in some closing situations to enable the prospect to arrive at a decision.
8. In almost any selling endeavor, price enters in as the biggest objection. Prove that the price is right and you'll close many more sales.
9. Be persistent in a tactful way. One successful salesperson credits almost 40 percent of sales to making one more attempt to close just before leaving the prospect.
10. Simple and obvious--DON'T FORGET TO ASK FOR THE ORDER!

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #11

BE A 21ST CENTURY SALESPERSON.

Keeping a little
ahead of
conditions is
one of the
secrets of
business.

Charles M. Schwab

Let's see how up to date you are. Answer the following questions and then tally your score at the end to see how "with it" you really are.

1. Do you own a computer?
2. If you don't own a computer, do you at least know how to operate one fairly efficiently?
3. Do you have faxing capabilities, either by machine or through your computer?
4. Do you have a database of customers in your computer?
5. Do you have a computer database but still insist on keeping duplicate paper files?
6. Do you have a mobile phone?
7. Do you have a pager?
8. Are you familiar with electronic mail?
9. Can you browse the web and easily discover the information needed?
10. Do you do at least 75 percent of your research on the web?
11. Do you have a website?
12. Do you prospect on the web?
13. Do you and your company offer on-line sales and service?

SCORE:

- 13-10 Yes Answers = Power User Salesperson
- 9-6 Yes Answers = On the high end of this scale, you're getting there. On the low end, you're probably an average salesperson with average results.
- 5-0 Yes Answers = You work harder every day but never seem to get ahead. Someday they'll have to send in a forklift for all the piles of paperwork on your desk and those overflowing from your files.

INVESTIGATIVE PRINCIPLE #12

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND HIGH-ENERGY ENTHUSIASM.

What you believe to be true, usually is! When your thoughts follow negative patterns, you are your own worst enemy. Remove the words “I Can’t” from your vocabulary. Speak with conviction. Replace those weak words with strong, positive ones like “I am,” “I can” and “I believe!”

You have a choice to let go of the past. Don’t try to analyze or rationalize the negative. Simply let go. It happened, it’s over--NEXT!

Start a personal possibilities program.

Ask yourself positive questions just as you learned to ask your customers questions.

What are your weaknesses?

How are those affecting your beliefs and actions?

What are your strengths?

How can you use them to full advantage?

What steps must be taken to improve your weaknesses and make your strengths outstanding?

When can you expect these changes to occur?

Who else needs to be involved in the changing process?

Take it one simple step at a time and reward yourself for each small victory.

Become a student of the positive--investigate success

Find a mentor. Observe his or her behavior. Listen to their speech. Imagine what it would feel like to be just like them.

Believe that you can be as successful or even more successful than you mentor.

Being positive
and enthusiastic
is contagious--
spread it
around!

Omar Periu

Investigative Selling Principle #12

Act on your dreams and make them real.

Learn to set and achieve goals. Write down the goal, the steps it will take to achieve it, the way you will celebrate your success, the expectations you have when you attain your goal, and how others will benefit from your goal as well.

Maintain a focused state and create more momentum. Once you have a plan, stick to it, work it, complete it!

Acting as if you have achieved your goal puts you one step closer to doing so.

Be strong mentally and physically.

Keep a balance of fun and hard work, rest and readiness.

Have a spirit of thanksgiving for your success.

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